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Government
Publications



No. 1

N° 1

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**
Third Session, 36th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**
Troisième session, 36^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 22 April 1999

Jeudi 22 avril 1999



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430

Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



Service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation

3330 Édifice Whitney ; 99, rue Wellesley ouest

Toronto ON M7A 1A2

Téléphone, 416-325-7400 ; télécopieur, 416-325-7430

Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 22 April 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 22 avril 1999

The first day of the third session of the 36th Parliament of the Province of Ontario commenced at 1500 pursuant to a proclamation of the Honourable Hilary M. Weston.

Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor was pleased to open the session by reading the speech from the throne.

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Hon Hilary M. Weston (Lieutenant Governor):
Pray be seated.

Mr Speaker, members of the Legislative Assembly, citizens of this province:

I am pleased to welcome you to the opening of the third session of the 36th Parliament of Ontario.

This ceremony is rooted in more than 700 years of history. When Edward I summoned the first representative Parliament in 1295, he opened with an address outlining the King's own priorities. Today, we live in a modern democracy where the sovereign reigns but does not rule and the people's elected government acts in the name of the crown.

Parliament now opens with a speech prepared by Her Majesty's ministers, setting forth the government's policies and plans.

Thus, the speech that I read this afternoon represents both our democracy's link to the past and its forward evolution — a symbol of continuity as well as progress.

We should first pause to honour four Ottawa-Carleton transit workers who earlier this month were killed while working to provide for themselves and their families. We remember — nous nous rappelons — Brian Guay, Clare Davidson, David Lemay and Harry Schoenmakers.

Since the prorogation of the second session, Ontario has lost three distinguished former parliamentarians:

Margaret Campbell, lawyer and provincial court judge, served as MPP for Toronto's St George constituency from 1973 to 1981;

Donald Alexander Paterson, owner and manager of Paterson's Dry Goods and lifelong resident of Leamington, represented the people of Essex South for 12 years;

Charles Joseph Sylvanus Apps, better known as Syl Apps, represented the Kingston area for the same 12-year period and served as Minister of Correctional Services.

Margaret Campbell was a trailblazer throughout her life. Called to the bar in 1937 at a time when women faced obstacles to a career in law, by 1952 she had established her own law firm.

As Toronto's budget chief, Campbell was credited with modernizing the city's budget process and introducing the widespread use of computers at city hall. In 1973, after serving as family court judge, she was the first woman to be elected as a Liberal member of this Assembly.

In recognition of her pioneering spirit and many achievements, in 1984 the Liberal Party established the Margaret Campbell fund to support the recruitment and nomination of women seeking election to the Legislature.

Though he left Queen's Park in 1975, Donald Paterson's love of politics and service to his community did not end.

A concerned conservationist, Paterson will also be remembered for planting thousands of trees at the Two Creeks Conservation Area, which he helped to create.

Donald Paterson's final act was the donation of his two corneas for transplant. This noble act on the part of a man who prided himself on his humility serves as a reminder to us all of the importance of organ donation.

A Canadian pole vault champion, Olympian and star centre with the Toronto Maple Leafs, Syl Apps left the team at the height of his hockey career to enlist in the Royal Canadian Army and serve during the Second World War.

Returning to the Leafs after the war, Apps also served as Ontario Athletics Commissioner before entering politics.

To honour Syl Apps's love of sport, devotion to duty and years of service to the people of our province, the government will create an office for community sport and recreational development, managed under the leadership of a provincial coordinator.

Among the coordinator's duties will be the annual presentation of Syl Apps Awards of Excellence to boys and girls from across Ontario who embody his qualities of athleticism, duty and service.

People throughout Ontario — indeed, across Canada — recently marked the retirement of the building where Syl Apps played many of his best games: Maple Leaf Gardens.

A construction project that brought hope and pride even during the darkest days of the Great Depression, the Gardens played host to events as diverse as political conventions and rock concerts, and for 68 years was home to Syl's beloved Maple Leafs.

This week also marked the end of another landmark era in Canadian hockey — the Gretzky era. As the greatest player ever, Wayne Gretzky will not only be remem-

bered for his brilliance on the ice, but also as an ambassador for Canada and the game of hockey worldwide.

The memories of our province's rich history that are shared between generations, and between mothers, fathers and their children, remind us of the special bond we feel towards our parents, grandparents and others who raised us.

With much love and pride, we take a moment to thank those who brought us up, who cared for us through thick and thin, and who challenged us to work hard, to do our best and to never give up.

The people of Ontario also value freedom and human rights.

Today, we pray for all the men and women of the Canadian armed forces, especially those risking their lives to protect minorities in other countries.

Our thoughts are with all peoples on earth seeking refuge from persecution.

Events half a world away remind us that our province has been shaped by the contributions of men and women from around the globe.

This time of year is important to many different members of the Ontario family, including those of the Jewish faith commemorating Passover, Baha'is recognizing the holy period of Ridvan, Christians celebrating the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Sikhs and Hindus marking Vaisakhi, Muslims commemorating Eid-ul-Adha, and Buddhists marking Vesakha.

These — and other — religious observances remind us that, whatever our background, we are united by common principles of family, tolerance, responsibility and compassion.

These principles led your government to conduct province-wide consultations on barriers to accessibility faced by persons with disabilities. Last fall, your government introduced legislation — the first of its kind in Canada — aimed at breaking down those barriers.

Concerns expressed about this pioneering legislation, however, have been heard. In response, your government will take the time necessary to gather additional input, and will consult further before reintroducing a bill for consideration by the Legislature.

The economy is strong. But today's successes are merely a prologue to tomorrow's challenges.

Your government continues to work to make Ontario more competitive and to maintain its reputation as an attractive place to invest, do business and create jobs.

Working together, in less than four years the people of this province have made unparalleled progress.

The deficit has been reduced and, provided the government maintains fiscal discipline and continues to make tough decisions, the budget is on track to be balanced in the year 2000-01, as promised.

1510

The private sector has created 540,000 new jobs in less than four years.

Taxes have been cut — 69 times.

Nous avons réduit les taxes et les impôts — 69 fois.

Le revenu net d'impôt d'une famille moyenne s'est accru de plus de \$3,000.

The average family's after-tax income has increased by more than \$3,000.

Ontario now leads the nation in economic growth.

For the first time this decade, there is underlying strength to our economy.

All in Ontario have worked hard — taxpayers, families, employees, small business owners and government. The people of this province have made great progress to get our house in order after years of neglect. While more work remains, people have said the province is on the right track.

Yet Ontario cannot become complacent.

Prosperity did not materialize out of thin air. Economic progress cannot be taken for granted. Both are the result of clear vision, decisive action, hard work and strong leadership.

As citizens of this province, we cannot let up our efforts or coast if we expect to preserve the economic gains won by Ontario families over the past four years.

Economic success stems from making the right choices.

And prosperity gained all too quickly can become prosperity lost if we make the wrong choices.

Future progress depends on continued vigilance, courage and strength of purpose.

Neither Canada nor Ontario is immune to the pressures of a global economy.

We live in a competitive and volatile world — one where jobs and investment can exit the province more easily and quickly than they entered, often at the push of a button.

In a global economy, one false move could result in thousands of lost jobs.

Economic progress, job creation and improvement in our standard of living are fragile.

The 1998 annual report of the Conference Board of Canada serves as a wake-up call to all of us.

While describing 1997's economic performance as "solid," the conference board notes that Canada had "lost ground" against other countries — especially our major competitor, the United States.

According to its report, "our poor record of manufacturing productivity growth in the 1990s stands in the way of improving our competitiveness and quality of life in the 21st century. Canadian workers are more productive than most, but less so than US workers. This puts us at a disadvantage in attracting investment in North American markets."

The board warns that our continued inability to generate greater productivity growth is "extremely worrisome. Without improvements, our quality of life is in jeopardy."

"Quality of life" may sound abstract.

The people of Ontario know what it means in real-life terms: Good jobs. Higher take-home pay. More opportunities for our children. Providing for our families. Things that we cherish — like a first-class education system and health care we can rely on.

Strong leadership and clear action are required to protect them. In particular, four key steps:

First, we must continue to reduce taxes.

The debate is over. High taxes kill jobs. Tax cuts create jobs.

Canadian taxes are much higher than those in the United States, which continues to cut its taxes, a fact stressed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development last November.

The international body recommends that: "To the extent that the fiscal situation continues to improve, consideration must be given to rolling back the relatively high average tax burden faced by Canadians and lowering high marginal income tax rates."

As one step in the right direction, members will be asked in this session to consider a Taxpayer Protection Act that would prevent future governments from raising taxes without voter approval.

This legislation recognizes that the money spent by government does not belong to government. It belongs to the people who earned it in the first place. It belongs to taxpayers. It is theirs. There must be limits to the amount government can reach into the pockets of hard-working citizens.

Second, we must maintain the province's reputation as an attractive place to invest and create jobs.

Our nation relies heavily on investment to create jobs.

In the words of the Conference Board of Canada, our ability to attract investment "will remain one of the central determinants of our industrial competitiveness as we head into the 21st century. We must ensure that we 'get our share'; otherwise, we will be unable to maintain, much less build upon, our successes of the past."

In a competitive global environment, the eyes of the international community are upon us.

Two years ago, the rights of a group of employees at a Windsor Wal-Mart store were ignored when they were unionized, despite voting three to one against a union. Newspapers such as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and Washington Post followed this story closely and spread word across North America and to readers — and investors — around the world.

Last session, members passed a workplace democracy act, Bill 31, which protects the rights of workers by allowing only the workers themselves to decide whether they will unionize.

While some union leaders and politicians have called for Bill 31's repeal, your government believes that such a reversal would be wrong. Repeal would hurt employees' democratic rights. By sending a negative signal to potential job creators and investors, repeal of Bill 31 would also hurt people looking for work and young people about to graduate and seek their first jobs.

Quite simply, protecting Ontario's economic gains means staying the course.

Efforts to reduce red tape and other barriers to job creation must be redoubled. Members will therefore be asked to consider the Red Tape Reduction Act — the

most recent in a number of bills the government has introduced to eliminate job-killing regulation.

Ontario cannot afford to slide back to the old days of tax-and-spend government. To that end, members will be asked to consider a Balanced Budget Act that would penalize the Premier and cabinet if in future they fail to balance the budget.

This legislation simply proposes that governments do what Ontario working families do every day — balance their books, pay their debts and spend within their means.

Third, within Canada, we must eliminate barriers to internal trade.

Your government's position is clear: The Quebec government's 30-year history of unfair treatment of construction contractors and workers from Ontario and its foot-dragging in living up to internal trade agreements can no longer be tolerated. This is particularly so since, until this month, companies and workers from Quebec had unrestricted access to our province while many Ontario construction workers went without work.

1520

Nous ne pouvons plus tolérer le traitement injuste des entrepreneurs de construction et des ouvriers du bâtiment de l'Ontario, ni la lenteur à appliquer la disposition des ententes sur le commerce intérieur.

Recently, the government announced tough measures intended to level the playing field between our two provinces. As the next step, the members will be asked to consider a Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act to place new restrictions on construction contractors, workers and aggregate haulers from any place that does not treat Ontario's contractors and workers fairly.

Our ultimate goal is the elimination of barriers, not their entrenchment. Until the playing field is levelled, however, your government is taking strong action to defend the jobs and the livelihood of its people.

Fourth, to maintain Ontario's economic strength and growth requires a clear plan for the future.

Following extensive consultations, the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board has developed a blueprint to enhance our competitiveness and improve our standard of living.

Its final report, A Road Map To Prosperity, addresses the twin challenges of creating meaningful jobs and strengthening the economy — both vital to give us the means to support the things that matter most to us, such as first-class health care and excellence in education.

Your government will follow the road map provided by the Jobs and Investment Board.

A strong economy is important, vital, and critical.

But a strong economy means much more.

C'est le fondement de tout ce que les gens veulent d'autre, pour eux-mêmes et pour leur famille.

A strong economy is the foundation of everything else people want in life for themselves and their families.

Only a strong economy will give us the means to put even more precious dollars into a strong health care system.

Only a strong economy lets us maintain a strong education system.

Only a strong economy means people can look forward to a brighter future for our children, a cleaner environment, and a safer province.

Good government is about making the right choices, about ensuring that what government spends is actually an investment in today and tomorrow.

Only a strong economy generates the resources needed to maintain an excellent system of public education.

Child advocate the Honourable Margaret McCain and renowned expert Dr Fraser Mustard have prepared a ground-breaking report that examines children's development during the early years of their lives.

Their exciting study provides compelling evidence that the manner in which the brain develops before age six — in particular, before age three — has a profound effect on learning, behaviour, coping skills and health in later life.

This government enthusiastically agrees that early childhood development is a high public priority for all of us, especially parents, grandparents and education and community professionals.

Your government embraces this report. Earlier this week it responded with an Early Years program that combines existing programs and bold new initiatives.

Excellence in our elementary and secondary schools is characterized by accountability and high standards. This government's plan for better education and excellence will continue.

Building on what has already been accomplished, the government has developed a Charter of Education Rights and Responsibilities that outlines principles by which all those involved in classroom learning can work together for the highest-quality education possible.

The charter identifies essential rights and responsibilities of students, teachers and parents. To that end, the government will create a province-wide code of conduct for students that sets clear minimum standards for behaviour and spells out the consequences for breaking the rules; give teachers the resources they need to maintain respect and discipline in their classrooms and to ensure a safe, productive learning environment; require all teachers to participate in a compulsory competency testing program to stay up to date; expand student testing to all grades; ensure that schools promote only those students with acceptable levels of achievement; and give parents the right to a more active role in the education system.

Since 1995, your government has introduced a number of education reforms, such as an improved curriculum and standard testing.

Through these meaningful measures, parents can now track their children's progress, evaluate schools in their neighbourhoods and compare boards' performance.

Ensuring quality education for our children requires measuring progress and making certain that all of our teachers have the tools and training they need to get the job done. Just as we now test the performance of our schools and our students, so too should we test teachers.

Your government's plan for post-secondary education also recognizes excellence and achievement. It will continue to improve access, assist students who need it and work to ensure that degrees and diplomas are direct paths to jobs.

From our early days continuing through adulthood, learning must be a lifelong process. This is particularly true as all of us are required to adapt to new technology, new lifestyles and an ever-changing job market.

Many diverse programs and initiatives throughout the province already contribute to a learning society. Your government will take a leadership role to coordinate these many and diverse fragments.

Your government will also work to ensure that the voice of retired teachers is heard in decisions about the pension plan of which they are beneficiaries.

Before 1995, respect, dignity and a clear route to self-reliance too often were missing from our welfare system, and too many children were the victims of dependency that was passed from one generation to the next.

Your government has worked to turn welfare from a handout to a hand up.

A strong economy and the introduction of work for welfare have combined to free 374,000 people from welfare dependency.

That's equivalent to 12 people every hour escaping the welfare trap, 12 people an hour whose lives are back on track.

Through mandatory work for welfare, more and more welfare recipients are learning new skills and earning valuable references. Many are being introduced to opportunities of which they had never before dreamt.

But the challenging task of turning our welfare system around is not yet complete. Ontario must build upon the progress made to date.

More can be done — more must be done — to ensure that welfare is but a short-term stage in anyone's life, to ensure that welfare is merely a transition phase leading to bigger and better things, including the excitement of getting and holding a job.

Your government will also reintroduce and ask members to consider amendments to the Child and Family Services Act which, if passed, would promote the best interest, protection and well-being of children. Your government hoped for and wanted the approval of this law during the last session. Once again, it is seeking the support of all members to ensure that no child suffers because better, clearer laws are not in place.

1530

Today, Earth Day 1999, we recognize the importance of our natural heritage.

Having inherited some of the most beautiful lands and waters in the country, the continent and, indeed, the world, we are filled with a sense of both pride and responsibility.

Your government recently announced the largest expansion of parks and protected areas in the history of Ontario — 378 new parks and protected areas.

As a result of the Living Legacy commitment, the people of Ontario now own more than 23 million acres of protected lands and waters, an area equivalent to all of Ontario south of Algonquin Park.

And, last week, one of the most famous urban parklands in the world — the Rouge — was expanded through your government's \$26.3-million donation, which includes 1,630 acres of land.

As a further step in our conservation plans and to recognize the coming millennium, your government will respond to groups that have asked it to take a leadership role in developing the Century Conservation Challenge Awards.

This awards program will recognize communities, provincial agencies, individuals and corporations that set and meet conservation goals to commemorate the new century and millennium.

The government is already taking other steps to protect our environment, launching the Drive Clean program to reduce smog in our cities and going to court to ensure that our American neighbours will hold themselves to the tough air quality standards to which Ontario will hold itself.

Although the people of Ontario have already accomplished a great deal, our work to protect the environment teaches us that we must continue to make progress and cannot coast on yesterday's victories.

All of us in this province cherish public health care. We expect it to be there for us when we need it.

As much as we value it, people also understand the delivery of health care is a complex and complicated issue. There are no easy answers.

This complexity is compounded by the fact that government funds the system but does not control every aspect of it.

Governments in all provinces and territories — regardless of political stripe — face many of the same issues and dilemmas.

The Ontario government is working closely with its counterparts in other provinces to share best practices and coordinate efforts to improve health care.

During the last four years, your government has made some difficult decisions to ensure that people have access to an efficient and modern system. This has not been easy, but for too long these decisions had been put off and Ontario's health care system was left to drift and decline.

Your government has made these long-delayed, tough decisions. Today, most experts agree that the health care system is now pointed in the right direction, and with renewed economic strength, for the first time in many years, Ontario has the ability to reinvest in health care.

This is all at risk, however, unless the economy is strong and vibrant.

It takes a strong economy to give us the means we need to support a health care system on which we all can truly rely. It takes a strong economy to preserve universal access to health care services.

En effet, il nous faut une économie vigoureuse pour nous permettre de financer un système de santé sur lequel nous pouvons tous vraiment compter. Il nous faut une économie vigoureuse si nous voulons protéger l'accès universel aux soins de santé.

Only a growing economy has made possible the expansion of cardiac care services by 36%, new dialysis services for 320 patients closer to their homes, expanded breast cancer screening for 325,000 women annually by 2,000, and 20,000 new long-term-care beds — the first in over a decade.

Construction of the first group of 6,700 long-term-care beds is already underway, and a further 6,700 beds will be awarded this spring. Included in the beds to be awarded will be Canada's first long-term-care centre for the deaf community. Your government will work with the Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf to meet the long-term-care needs of deaf seniors.

Furthermore, your government has launched Canada's first comprehensive strategy addressing the needs of people with Alzheimer's disease and their families.

Only a growing economy has made it possible for the provincial government to increase health care spending by \$1.5 billion since 1995, as well as offset the impact of federal funding cuts.

Ontario's government is proud to have led the campaign to reverse the federal government's health care cuts. The federal government has finally started to restore some of the \$2.8 billion that it cut. This is a good first step, but it is only a first step.

Your government has promised that every dollar of health care funding that the federal government restores to the people of Ontario will be spent on health care.

This money is already being directed to five priorities: hiring more nurses; reducing waiting lists; relieving pressure on emergency rooms; expanding home care even further; and accelerating the plan to open 20,000 new long-term-care beds.

While the task is difficult and the challenges are complex, your government is determined to continue to provide a universally accessible health care system that provides top-quality service to patients where and when they need it.

Citizens expect their elected representatives to keep our streets safe and our communities secure.

They expect their governments and leaders to be clearly and unequivocally on the side of victims — not willing and eager to defend and make excuses for the criminals who prey on too many.

The Ontario government hears the concerns people have voiced about the prevalence of crime.

It understands that these concerns are real and legitimate — not fabricated or overstated.

For decades, governments across the country have tried to explain away criminal behaviour. This approach has failed.

Governments need to explain less and to deter more.

Your government is fighting crime — not turning its back and dismissing people's concerns.

Already your government's actions are placing an additional 1,000 new front-line police officers on our streets, as well as 120 new OPP cadets.

Shortly it will place before you proposed legislation to establish a provincial registry of sex offenders. The bill is named Christopher's Law in memory of 11-year-old Christopher Stephenson, who in 1988 was brutally murdered by a convicted pedophile free on federal parole.

The government will also announce a comprehensive strategy to combat elder abuse.

The federal government once again has ignored the need and the public demand for fundamental reform of the young offenders law. For its part, the provincial government remains committed to turning young offenders' lives around through "boot camp" and strict discipline programs.

We must not forget the women and men who protect our neighbourhoods and our families — more so, those officers who lay down their lives doing so.

In order to properly recognize the sacrifice made by police officers who have lost their lives in the service of the people of Ontario, your government — in co-operation with police organizations — will construct a memorial to fallen officers.

This monument will be raised only yards away from this Legislature, just south of the Whitney Block. Its location will remind not just citizens — but also public servants, MPPs, and cabinet ministers — of the women and men across this province who gave their lives while safeguarding ours and those of our families.

As the year 2000 approaches, already preparations are underway for an entire year of celebration and commemoration, of remembrance of our past and optimism for our future.

As we prepare for the new millennium, the people of Ontario maintain these fundamental beliefs:

The global economy is a reality that cannot be ignored.

Our thirst for knowledge has never been as important.

Dignity, respect and self-reliance must continue to be part of our welfare system.

We must protect our environment.

We need to preserve a public health care system on which every family in Ontario can truly rely.

And the desire to protect the safety and security of ourselves and our families endures.

In the face of these demands, it is essential that Ontario continue to grow and prosper, continue to develop the means to provide what we all want and need.

Our province already derives much strength from its resources and its people.

But more than these alone will be required to maintain our forward momentum.

To match the strength of its citizens and resources, the people of Ontario need vision, determination, decisiveness, inspiration and courage from their leaders.

Your government understands these expectations.

It has responded to this challenge for the past four years.

And it will continue to do so into the future.

Members of the Legislative Assembly, may wisdom and fairness guide your deliberations throughout this session.

Dieu bénisse notre pays et notre province. Dieu protège la Reine.

Her Honour was then pleased to retire.

Prayers.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I beg to inform the House that to prevent mistakes, I have obtained a copy of the speech from the throne which I will now read.

Interjections: Go ahead.

The Speaker: Dispense? Agreed? Agreed.

Reading dispensed with.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Mr Harris moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 1, An Act to perpetuate an Ancient Parliamentary Right / Loi visant à perpétuer un ancien droit parlementaire.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay"

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): By a long-standing tradition, the first bill introduced in the Legislature concerns an initiative that has not been mentioned in the speech from the throne. In keeping with this practice, in what will very likely be the second-last throne speech of this Parliament, I am pleased to introduce this bill again.

This practice symbolizes the assembly's independence from the crown and the right of members to address the Legislature's own priorities before attending to other business.

MOTIONS

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor to this House be taken into consideration on Monday, April 26, 1999.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock on Monday, April 26, 1999.

The House adjourned at 1549.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	parliamentary assistant (Small Business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Hon / L'hon Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, David	Oriole	L	
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	
Cullen, Alex	Ottawa West / -Ouest	ND	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (Agriculture and Food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	parliamentary assistant (Rural Affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjointe parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward- Lennox-Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	parliamentary assistant (Colleges and Universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Environnement
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, deputy government House leader / Président du Conseil de gestion, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, vice-leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de la Santé
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Soins de longue durée, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Johnson, Hon / L'hon David	Don Mills	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	parliamentary assistant (Tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Leach, Hon / L'hon AI	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Lessard, Wayne	Windsor-Riverside	ND	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Children's Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (enfance)
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Travail
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLean, Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Blain K.	Nickel Belt	ND	
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	
Mushinski, Marilyn	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de la Santé
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	
Palladini, Hon / L'hon AI	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (Privatisation)
Saunderson, William	Eglinton	PC	
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiles, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services correctionnels
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.	Carleton	PC	Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC	Speaker / Président
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC	
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	
Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.	Markham	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David	York Mills	PC	Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC	
Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances

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No. 2A

N° 2A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**
Third Session, 36th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**
Troisième session, 36^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 26 April 1999

Lundi 26 avril 1999

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 26 April 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 26 avril 1999

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr David Caplan (Oriole): I rise today to mark the 84th anniversary of the Armenian genocide. April 24, 1915, was the start of a planned and systematic campaign to eradicate the Armenian people. One and a half million Armenian men, women and children were brutally killed.

At the time, the world community sat idle and did nothing. Thus the stage was set for other genocides and human tragedies. In fact, upon unveiling his final solution for the Jewish people, Hitler noted to his aides that the world would not lift a finger because, in his own words, "Who today remembers the Armenians?"

What is doubly tragic about the Armenian genocide is that even today much of the world refuses to acknowledge the horrific events. The perpetrators continue to deny the truth. This wound cannot heal. Peace can only be achieved through justice, justice cannot exist without the truth, and the truth is not divisible by two.

I was honoured to stand in remembrance with members of my community over this past weekend. Every year I've been proud to participate in the youth vigil on the grounds of this Legislature, and I was equally honoured to be asked to speak at the services at the Armenian Community Centre in my riding.

Recent events around the world will give members of this Legislature pause to remember the human tragedy of genocide and to give the survivors of this horror the recognition that they deserve and seek.

BEAR HUNTING

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I rise today to report to the House that people of northern Ontario are more and more starting to realize to just what extent this government has abandoned its responsibilities for those people in northern Ontario.

We found out this February that the government, on its own, without any consultation with people in northern Ontario and, I would suggest, even without the approval of the Minister of Natural Resources, cancelled the spring bear hunt.

We then found out later on, during the spring, that even though thousands of people had gone to the Lands for Life meetings all across northeastern and northwestern Ontario, the government decided to go on its own, cook a backroom deal with a few companies within the forest industry and implement a Lands for Life policy that quite frankly is going to hurt the economy of northern Ontario.

I look at the Northern Miner today and I see that Wayne O'Connor, president of Band-Ore, is questioning why he supported the Conservatives in the last election, because as he puts it, by way of this policy you're basically putting an end to a lot of the mining activity that should be happening in northern Ontario.

We see a government that last fall and last winter cut back on the quality of snow removal on our northern highways. We find ourselves now being stranded in communities where we never used to see that before, and we're seeing highways not maintained to the quality they were in the past.

I come here with only one question at this point. It's a question northerners want me to ask the Premier of this province, the Premier who supposedly comes from northern Ontario. Premier, why have you turned your back on the people of northern Ontario?

BOWMANVILLE MAPLE FESTIVAL

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): It's a pleasure to be back in the House today and to remind members that historic downtown Bowmanville is beginning the first of its many celebrations in my riding of Durham East.

This Saturday, May 1, the annual Maple Festival and show will take place. Real maple syrup will be served all day long in the heart of downtown Bowmanville. This is truly a wonderful community event.

I would like to especially recognize those people who have worked so hard to bring this together: Edgar Lucas, who is chair; the BIA general manager, Garth Gilpin; Ron Hooper, the chair of the BIA; and Brian Purdy, Lori Allin, Kevin Anyon, Jan Penny, Monica Scott and James Rudd, to name but a few. All the merchants in downtown Bowmanville are involved.

Bob Schaeffer, from historic Tyrone Mill, will be on hand this year to make maple-flavoured donuts. Children will be able to sample sugar from a display put on by Jim Moore, a producer from Pontypool.

As well, a well-known woodcarver, Jan Oegema, and other hobbyists will be there displaying their wood-

carving talents for the community, as well as Lori Allin from Cactus Clothing, who will be coordinating this event.

The well-known Herb Knox and his Dixieland band will be there to entertain people all day long.

Charles Taw, the curator of Bowmanville Museum, is there to bring a sample of whatnots from all parts of our history and our past. Big Brothers will run an event, as will the Antique Car Club.

I invite all the members and their families to attend the Maple Festival in Bowmanville this Saturday.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): If ever there was proof needed that Mike Harris's drastic cuts to our hospital system have had a devastating impact on patient care in Ontario, the situation I am about to disclose to the House will absolutely confirm that horrible reality.

A constituent of mine was diagnosed with breast cancer in mid-January of this year. A decision was quickly made that a bilateral — double — mastectomy was needed. Naturally, my constituent was quite terrified and anxious to have this major surgery done as quickly as possible. The problem was that because of cutbacks in beds at Thunder Bay Regional Hospital, imposed by this government over the last four years, my constituent could not get a bed in which to recover from this major surgical procedure.

As a result, with her growing fear that the cancer could be rapidly spreading, she had the procedure done as day surgery: in by 7:30 am, out by 2:30 pm.

Although it may seem difficult to believe that we now live in a province where this could happen, it is my sad understanding that there are several other examples of this occurring in our community and across the province.

No matter what Mike Harris says now or during the upcoming election campaign, the fact is that his cutbacks in funding to our hospitals have left this constituent and countless others without the care they need or deserve.

That is why the Ontario Liberals under Dalton McGuinty have committed that every Ontarian who needs a hospital bed will get that bed. It is unacceptable and shameful that my constituent should have been treated this way, especially in a province that used to pride itself on the quality of its health care.

Every resident of Ontario deserves much better.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): On Friday the coroner's jury delivered its verdict on the James Lonnee inquest, making 119 recommendations around the care of young offenders in the care of the government. There were very serious concerns raised throughout that inquest on the way in which the youth justice system operates.

We all know that the death of James Lonnee was just one tragedy in a long train of tragedies that began at the Bluewater Youth Centre, continued at the Elgin-

Middlesex Detention Centre and then followed the young offenders involved in those events throughout their travels through the youth criminal justice system.

It is time that the Solicitor General called a public inquiry into that whole sorry train of events. It is important for the families of the young offenders involved and important for the staff who were involved, either as those accused of crimes or those who had to bear witness in those cases. It is important for all citizens to know what the train of events were that led us through this sorry spectacle in the criminal justice system for youthful offenders.

I call today on the Solicitor General to immediately call for a public inquiry into those events.

SYL APPS

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): A very prominent citizen who served in this Legislature has passed away and I would like to take a few moments to commemorate his memory and his impressive contributions.

Syl Apps has been described as a model athlete, a gentleman and a man who cared about public service and his community. Mr Apps passed away on December 24.

He is perhaps best remembered for his career with the Toronto Maple Leafs in the 1930s and 1940s. During that time he scored 201 goals with 231 assists. He accumulated 56 penalty minutes during that time, winning the Lady Byng Trophy as the league's most gentlemanly player following the 1941-42 season.

Modesty and honesty were Syl Apps's hallmarks. It is reported that in 1943 he missed half the season when he broke his leg and he actually tried to return \$1,000 of his \$6,000 salary. In another instance, he went to officials after a game to let them know that an assist that had been credited to him should have gone to a teammate, and that was at a time when he was fighting for the league scoring title, with a \$1,000 bonus on the line.

He was the MPP for Kingston and The Islands from 1963 to 1974 and served with distinction as Minister of Correctional Services from 1971 until his retirement. His other accomplishments are numerous: winner of the pole vault in the British Empire Games of 1934, fighting for his country during the Second World War, team captain for the Toronto Maple Leafs and winning numerous Stanley Cups.

I know my colleagues join me in extending our condolences to his family on their loss. He conducted his life with integrity and was a role model to his fans and the people of his riding, who were so fortunate to have him as their member.

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GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): It is difficult to reach into the mailbox or open the local newspaper, listen to the radio or watch television without being

overwhelmed by the deluge of Harris government propaganda paid for by the beleaguered taxpayers of Ontario.

For a government which pinches pennies when it comes to education or hospital funding, the Ontario Conservatives are more than eager to spend wildly when it comes to promoting themselves with expensive pamphlets, full-page newspaper ads, catchy, if inaccurate, radio spots and highly partisan and slanted, self-congratulatory TV commercials.

"I've never seen anything like this type of advertising anywhere in Canada," says Nelson Wiseman, a University of Toronto political scientist... 'It's a flagrant and wasteful expenditure of public monies,' he says. 'It's all the more insulting to the intelligence of the public because this is a government that said it was going to cut back on wasteful spending.'"

Perhaps the Brantford Expositor said it best when it said:

"When the Tories took office three years ago, they set themselves up on a higher pedestal, promising fiscal rectitude and vowing to bring an end to pork-barrel politics, but as we so clearly see this week, the concept of sharing ends at Queen's Park. At the same time that school boards are closing schools, cities are cutting services and some municipalities are having trouble containing their tax increases due to downloading, the Harris government has managed to find millions to spread the word about how wonderful the Premier is."

Maybe the Tory brain trust figures you can fool all of the people all the time — \$100 million worth of ads.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I say to the government that their deathbed repentance with regard to health care is fooling no one, certainly in Hamilton. They know there are two main reasons you're moving on health care: One is that the polls show you're extremely vulnerable, as you should be, on the issue of health care; secondly, you've now got loot from the federal government that, by the way, is ours because it was unjustly and unfairly held back and discriminatorily held back from us in the past. But it's not your money, it's not your initiative and it's not your agenda.

Running around and handing out cheques for health care in Hamilton is fooling no one. The recent announcement by the self-titled minister for Hamilton, Cam Jackson, announcing last week long-term-care beds for what used to be St Peter's Hospital, is fooling no one either. The fact is we used to have a full-fledged, chronic care, licensed, funded hospital, for which the NDP government had funded \$12.5 million more to renovate the important south wing; this, on top of the fact that you've eliminated the Chedoke emergency care ward from the people on the mountain, and the fact that you're still planning to shut down the HPH, which clearly is a facility that's needed across Hamilton.

No one is fooled in Hamilton. This government is attacking the health care system in Hamilton, and your day of reckoning is coming.

NIAGARA GRAPE AND WINE FESTIVAL

Mr Tom Froese (St Catharines-Brock): Attractions Ontario and the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism recently announced five Ontario attractions and events as finalists in the national tourism competition being held at a gala in Montreal on April 28. I'm very pleased to report that the Niagara Grape and Wine Festival has been chosen as one of those five Ontario finalists in the cultural event category.

The festival, which began in 1952 with a partnership between the city of St Catharines and the Ontario Grape Growers' Marketing Board, is held each September and attracts over 500,000 visitors over a 10-day period. Without a doubt, the festival's cultural legacy is the true community spirit it generates, with over 20 Niagara wineries participating and more than 60 separate events offered by the community, from parades to children's programs and seniors' events.

I'd like to take this opportunity to congratulate Gerry Ginsberg, the festival's general manager, his staff and the many volunteers that make this event so successful. I'm sure that all members will join with me in wishing the Niagara Grape and Wine Festival every success at the national finals in Montreal on Wednesday.

MARGARET CAMPBELL

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to ask for unanimous consent to pay tribute to Margaret Campbell.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? Agreed.

Mrs McLeod: It's a privilege for me to be able to pay tribute to Margaret Campbell on behalf of my caucus and on behalf of the Ontario Liberal Party. In fact, for those of us who knew Margaret well and who campaigned with her, it's hard to imagine that Margaret Campbell will not be part of the next election campaign. She has been a tireless campaigner in St George from the time she first ran successfully for that seat in a by-election in March 1973.

Recent newspaper reflections on Margaret's life have provided all of us with the facts of a truly remarkable career. Some things those of us who knew her were well aware of, but there were always some surprises when it came to Margaret Campbell. I knew, for example, that her husband, Sterling, was an equally remarkable person, an award-winning Hollywood director and producer and a war veteran, but I did not know that Margaret herself had done undercover work for the Mounties and had captured two German spies. But then again, no one who knew Margaret Campbell should be surprised by the fact that she was involved in something significant and unusual, particularly for a woman.

Margaret was an Osgoode Hall Law School graduate and she was serving as a provincial court judge when she decided to run for provincial office. It's remarkable in itself that she would have left the bench to go back into politics; remember that it was quite an achievement for a woman to have made it into the judiciary at that stage of the game. But Margaret clearly had some more crusades to wage.

Margaret Campbell made a lifelong habit of doing the unexpected and she managed to break a lot of glass ceilings along the way. She was a Conservative but she saw the light and ran as a Liberal, with no apology to anyone for her decision. At that particular time her decision would have caught people by surprise, because she decided to run as a Liberal candidate in a riding that had been a Conservative stronghold for 30 years and she was running against a man named Roy McMurtry, who subsequently proved that he was not a candidate to be taken lightly.

But Margaret not only had a habit of doing the unexpected; she had a habit of doing it well. She won that by-election, backed by the respect she had gained as a municipal councillor when she served as budget chief, a role not often filled by a woman, and campaigned against the harassment of women on the streets of Toronto. She was equally formidable as a member of the Legislature, leading the crusades for women's rights and gay rights and fighting for better health care and for improvements to the justice system.

"Formidable" is probably the best adjective that sums up the public Margaret Campbell, but it doesn't quite catch the essence of the person. Formidable and feisty she was indeed, a woman of strong principle and equally strong opinions, and she never hesitated to make both very clear. She still had a lot to teach each of us at 86 years of age and her messages still came across as strongly as ever.

Margaret Campbell was also a caring, compassionate person and a social visionary. She saw the world as she felt it should and could be and she did her best to make it better for people. She was a loyal and a wonderfully supportive friend, as I had reason to know. She had a wonderful sense of humour and a capacity to see the foibles of humanity as well as the sometimes undetected strengths in individuals.

Above all, and with everything else, she was devoted to her family. When she retired from the Legislature in 1981, it was to spend more time with her husband and her grandchildren. As John Downing wrote at the time, "It was symbolic of how important Margaret was to her riding, her city and her party that at the age of 68 she still had to defend her reasons for not running again."

Margaret Campbell was considered to be the provincial Liberal Party in Metro Toronto in those early 1980s. She continued to be an inspiration to all Liberals and most particularly to women and to female candidates for our party, because of course one of the glass ceilings Margaret broke was in becoming the first female Liberal member of the Ontario Legislature.

The Margaret Campbell fund has now been set up to extend the kind of encouragement and support that Margaret herself offered to women getting started in politics.

As a beneficiary of the fund in my first provincial campaign, I felt as though I knew Margaret Campbell before I ever met her. Without any doubt, her pioneering efforts made it easier for all of us who were to follow in her footsteps.

The Margaret Campbell fund will now continue as a working memorial to Margaret and will help to ensure that at least one of her crusades continues. Her legacy will be as remarkable as the woman herself.

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Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I rise to join with my colleagues in this House to express our sadness at the passing of Margaret Campbell.

Back in 1975 when I was a young rookie elected to this House, there were certain members of the Legislature who one learned to listen to very closely, particularly if one wanted to be in this place for any length of time, and Margaret Campbell was certainly one of those. Although she had only been elected to this place in 1973, in a by-election, she addressed issues in such a way that it appeared to me, as a young rookie, that she was one of the most knowledgeable and longest-serving of members, even though she had only been here a short time.

She was really quite formidable. When she rose to attack a government policy or to debate something that she saw as an injustice in this province, she was not someone you would take lightly. She was knowledgeable, she knew what the issues were, she could analyze them well and she had the facts to back up her positions.

She always carried an enormous stack of materials with her. I don't know whether that was just to intimidate the opposition with the material that she had to back up her arguments or whether, as I suspect it really was, it was the material that she had indeed researched before any presentation in this Legislature.

She had a wonderful sense of humour which usually took others by surprise when sometimes she would see the irony in a particular matter and would put forward her position in a sardonic and sometimes very humorous manner.

But what I recall most of all was her serious commitment to the vulnerable, to the downtrodden, to those who had little resources to be able to put forward their own position, and Margaret Campbell was there to speak on their behalf.

I learned a great deal as a rookie in this Legislature from Margaret Campbell. I considered myself fortunate to have been able to serve with her. I kept in not regular but some contact with her after she left this place and I want to say quite sincerely that I was very pleased to be able to count Ms Campbell among my friends.

I do regret her passing but recognize that she had a long and full life, that she was able to make an enormous commitment to the public life of this province and, in a way, while regretting her passing, we celebrate her contribution to Ontario.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I would just like to pass along our condolences to Margaret's family, her friends and the community on the passing of a very tremendous individual who contributed so much while she was here.

One of the time frames in which I had contact with Margaret was from 1977 until she left this place I believe in the early 1980s. One of the things that you noted about her is that she was very deceptive in appearing to be totally unorganized but able to come right to the nub of the issue, immediately or very quickly, and be very perceptive as to what was important and what was unimportant in the legislation.

I think the other part too, speaking from the point of the government, as we were during that period of time that I had experience, was that she drove a hard bargain in terms of dealing with legislation. She was very, very principled, some would say stubborn, in dealing with a piece of legislation. But she knew what she was talking about, she knew what she was driving for, and often the government listened and sometimes amended as a result of both her knowledge and her determination to bring the issue to the fore.

What I would remember most about her is that I believe she probably was one of the most unselfish people I have met in my lifetime because she was totally committed to the people she represented, to the people my colleagues have mentioned before; that is, to the weak, vulnerable, and those kinds of people in our community.

I believe she made a huge contribution not only to this Legislature but to the other activities that she was involved in as a judge and as a member of council here in the city of Toronto. She will be long remembered, by those of us who had the opportunity to sit with her, for her wit, her intelligence and her concern for those people.

I would like to pass along the condolences of my party to the Campbell family.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MEDICINE AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES MÉDECINS

Mr Kwinter moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 2, An Act to amend the Medicine Act, 1991 /
Projet de loi 2, Loi modifiant la Loi de 1991 sur les
médecins.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): This bill ensures that physicians who provide non-traditional therapies or alternative forms of medicine are not found guilty of professional misconduct or incompetence unless there is evidence that proves that the therapy poses a

greater risk to a patient's health than traditional or prevailing practice.

LOAN AND TRUST CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SOCIÉTÉS DE PRÊT ET DE FIDUCIE

Mr Eves moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend the Loan and Trust Corporations Act /
Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les
sociétés de prêt et de fiducie.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): This bill simply contains an amendment that is necessary to extend the legal authority of loan and trust companies to operate in the province of Ontario.

I believe that members will find this amendment straightforward. It's similar to ones that have been introduced in previous years. It is a piece of business that needs to be dealt with, however, in a timely manner. It can be easily dealt with. It's a non-partisan, non-contentious issue so that the loan and trust industry can continue to serve Ontarians as they have in the past.

EDUCATION AMENDMENT ACT (MOULD CONTAMINATION IN PORTABLE CLASSROOMS), 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ÉDUCATION (CONTAMINATION PAR LA MOISSURE DANS LES CLASSES MOBILES)

Mr Wildman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 4, An Act to protect the health of pupils and teachers against the effects of *Stachybotrys atra* mould in portable classrooms by making amendments to the Education Act /
Projet de loi 4, Loi visant à protéger la santé des élèves et des enseignants contre les effets de la moisissure *Stachybotrys atra* dans les classes mobiles en apportant des modifications à la Loi sur l'éducation.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): The bill requires school boards and operators of private schools to conduct regular testing and inspections for *stachybotrys atra* mould contamination in portable classrooms. If mould contamination is found, it must be cleaned up or the pupils must be moved to another classroom.

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UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999
MODIFIANT LA LOI INTITULÉE
UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA ACT, 1965

Mr Caplan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 5, An Act to amend the University of Ottawa Act, 1965 / Projet de loi 5, Loi modifiant la loi intitulée University of Ottawa Act, 1965.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr David Caplan (Oriole): Briefly, this bill would change the composition of the University of Ottawa board of governors in two ways. It would formalize the role of student officials on the board; it's only been a convention in the past. Secondly, it would increase student representation from two to six members and provide a starting point of discussion to increase the role of students in decision-making on tuition issues.

I'd like to thank the student federation of the University of Ottawa for their suggestion and assistance in developing this bill.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
AMENDMENT ACT
(CHILD WELFARE REFORM), 1999
LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE
ET À LA FAMILLE (RÉFORME
DU BIEN-ÊTRE DE L'ENFANCE)

Mrs Ecker moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act in order to better promote the best interests, protection and wellbeing of children / Projet de loi 6, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille afin de mieux promouvoir l'intérêt véritable de l'enfant, sa protection et son bien-être.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

MINISTERIAL TRAVEL
ACCOUNTABILITY ACT, 1999
LOI DE 1999 SUR L'OBLIGATION
DE RENDRE COMPTE
DES VOYAGES MINISTÉRIELS

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 7, An Act respecting Accountability for Ministerial Travel / Projet de loi 7, Loi concernant l'obligation de rendre compte des voyages ministériels.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This bill requires members of the executive council of Ontario to submit to the Legislative Assembly or to the Clerk of the Assembly information relating to any travel by the member on government business to areas outside the province. The information must be submitted within 60 days of the member's return from outside the province.

CANADA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE
AND SCHOOL OF GRADUATE
THEOLOGICAL STUDIES ACT, 1999

Mr Klees moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr4, An Act respecting Canada Christian College and School of Graduate Theological Studies.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

VINTNERS QUALITY
ALLIANCE ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ APPELÉE
VINTNERS QUALITY ALLIANCE

Mr Tsubouchi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to provide for the designation of a wine authority to establish an appellation of origin system for Vintners Quality Alliance wine and to administer that system / Projet de loi 8, Loi prévoyant la désignation d'un office des vins afin d'établir et d'administrer un système d'appellations d'origine pour les vins de la société appelée Vintners Quality Alliance.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): This bill will provide a framework to allow our Ontario wines access to European markets and also promote the high quality of Ontario wines.

NURSES' BILL OF RIGHTS, 1999
DÉCLARATION DES DROITS
DES INFIRMIÈRES
ET INFIRMIERS DE 1999

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 9, An Act to protect the rights of nurses providing services in Ontario / Projet de loi 9, Loi visant à protéger les droits des infirmières et infirmiers qui offrent des services en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): The purpose of this bill is to establish a bill of rights for nurses providing nursing services in hospitals in Ontario.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN
INVOLVED IN PROSTITUTION ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA PROTECTION
DES ENFANTS QUI SE LIVRENT
À LA PROSTITUTION

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 10, An Act to protect Children involved in Prostitution / Projet de loi 10, Loi visant à protéger les enfants qui se livrent à la prostitution.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): The purpose of this bill is to protect children under 18 who are involved in prostitution.

LOWER PROPERTY TAXES
IN SUDBURY ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA RÉDUCTION
DES IMPÔTS FONCIERS
PRÉLEVÉS À SUDBURY

Mr Bartolucci moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 11, An Act relating to property taxes in Sudbury / Projet de loi 11, Loi concernant les impôts fonciers prélevés à Sudbury.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This bill relates to property taxes in Sudbury in part XXII.2 of the Municipal Act, which was amended by the Fairness for Property Taxpayers Act, 1998, so that there will be fairness in property taxes in Sudbury.

VISITORS

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I would like to inform all members that we have in the Speaker's gallery today Mr Pavlo Movchan, member of Parliament for the government of Ukraine. Welcome, sir.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c), the House shall meet from 6:30 to 9:30 pm on April 26, 27, 28 and 29, 1999, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to put forward a motion without notice regarding private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move that, notwithstanding standing order 96(a), the House will not meet to consider private members' public business on Thursday morning, April 29, 1999, and that, notwithstanding standing order 95(g), the requirement for notice be waived with respect to ballot items 1 through 6.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

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STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I'm pleased today to introduce the Child and Family Services Amendment Act.

The need for this legislation is clearly urgent. The safety and security of children, the most vulnerable members of our society, are at stake. Members of the public present in the gallery today recognize that urgency and so does this government.

I'd like to welcome members of children's aid societies who are in the gallery today: Bruce Rivers, the executive director of the Toronto CAS; Dr Colin Maloney, who is with the Toronto Catholic CAS; Mary McConville, the executive director of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies; and Diane Cresswell, who is with the association as well. I'd like to thank them for all their work and support on these very important amendments.

Today I will be asking the members across the way to join with the government to provide unanimous consent for us to waive the normal rules for the printing of the bill so that we can have second and third readings of this most important bill in one sitting.

Given its legislative history in the last session, I will spend just a few moments outlining the key features of this bill. I believe members are well aware of the urgency of providing front-line child protection workers, professionals and the courts with the tools necessary to safeguard the most vulnerable members of our society.

The amendments proposed by this bill address eight key objectives:

The first one is to make clear that the Child and Family Services Act always puts the best interests, protection and well-being of children first; second, to expand the grounds for finding a child to be in need of protection;

third, to make evidence of past conduct towards any child admissible at any stage in child protection proceedings; fourth, to clarify requirements for both the general public and professionals to report that a child is or may be in need of protection; fifth, to improve the access of children's aid societies to information they need to protect children at risk; sixth, to encourage earlier planning of permanent arrangements by reducing the time that children may remain in the temporary care of a children's aid society; seventh, to ensure that access to crown wards is beneficial to the child and that access will not impair opportunities for adoption or stable placement; and finally, to provide for a mandatory review of the Child and Family Services Act at least every five years.

As I said at the outset, the need for this legislation is clear. Needed improvements in the child protection system were highlighted by the findings and recommendations of six inquests into the deaths of 10 children between 1991 and 1996.

In 1997, the Ontario Child Mortality Task Force also made detailed suggestions concerning the tools and resources available to front-line workers, their training and the legislative base for child protection.

Last year, the government's expert panel, headed by Judge Mary Jane Hutton, told us there should be a better balance in the legislation between the interests of families and children. The panel recommended we make it clear that the paramount purpose of the act is to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children. We have considered their input and their recommendations very carefully in developing this important legislation. These amendments address those changes most urgently needed to ensure the safety of children.

It is therefore not surprising that these proposed amendments have received the public support of the deputy chief coroner of Ontario, the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, child protection experts and numerous executive directors of children's aid societies.

But we also recognize that while legislation is important, more is needed. That is why we have been taking additional steps: for example, the new risk assessment system which is now in place across the province to help front-line workers make better and more informed judgments about when a child is at risk; the new information database to link all CASs to enable the tracking of high-risk families wherever they move in the province — so far, over 40 children's aid societies have installed this new technology, and it is expected that the database will be installed in all 54 agencies by the end of May; \$15 million in new funding in 1997 for an extra 220 front-line workers and supervisors to help with the database development and also to provide training on the new risk assessment system; an additional \$170 million over three years for children's aid societies to support the hiring of another 760 additional child protection workers and supervisors to provide better staff training and to revitalize foster care, another important support for the system.

The first phase of this spending went out last year, and not only new money but a new funding framework for

child protection that will reflect actual service needs of a CAS and support rational planning and effective management of all these reforms.

In a perfect world, children would not need legislation to protect them from their parents; they would not need children's aid societies and child protection workers; they would never be the subject of coroners' inquests; they would be nurtured and protected by loving and caring parents and caregivers. Unfortunately, we do not live in a perfect world, and the result is that we must act on behalf of those children.

I know all members will agree with me that children are Ontario's most precious assets. They deserve the best our society can provide, a loving, nurturing environment, and above all, safety and security.

I am confident that the amendments proposed in this bill will make a difference. They will ensure that the best interests of children are the paramount concern of the child protection system and that the safety and security of children always come first.

I would now like to ask for unanimous consent from the members of this House to enable us to complete second reading, committee of the whole House, and third reading of the bill in one sessional day next Monday evening.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? Agreed.

Responses.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I want to make it clear that our support of this legislation and these amendments specifically has never been an issue in this Legislature. I put it on the record many, many months ago in a question to the Premier, making it perfectly clear that we would stand in support of having this legislation passed in this Legislature at the earliest possible opportunity.

This legislation could have been made law before Christmas. Let us be very clear about that. The Premier could have reconvened this House several months past. This legislation, again, could have been law today. I am not standing here today, to make it perfectly clear, saying that this legislation is perfect. I am saying that it is better to pass it at the earliest possible opportunity in its imperfect state and to improve it later on, rather than to become bogged down in legislative procedures at the expense of Ontario's children.

I think it's also important to understand that when it comes to children, this government is undergoing a deathbed repentance. Coroners' inquests have put forward recommendations to the effect that this kind of legislation should have been passed over two years ago.

I put together a document, First Steps, and released it in February 1998, outlining 41 substantive recommendations that would improve things for children in this province who are growing up at risk. This government chose to ignore those recommendations.

Let's look at the record. It's important to contrast what this government is championing today and what it has actually done during the past four years.

This government made cuts to our programs like junior kindergarten. In fact, the Premier at one point in time said JK was one of the dumbest things he'd ever heard of. But now he's the champion when it comes to early childhood education for Ontario children.

This government made cuts to special education. Parents who have taken on the responsibility of helping their kids who have learning disabilities are asking for a bit of help from this government. One of the things they're looking for is to make sure there are adequate special education programs in place in their community. This government responded by making cuts to special education programs in Ontario.

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Children who are in need of English as a second language, children coming here from other countries who, to prepare themselves for learning, need at a minimum to gain a better understanding of the English language: This government responded by making cuts to those programs.

This government made cuts to the children's aid societies. I think nearly half of our children's aid societies in Ontario today are running deficits. Additional monies that are going into those societies are going to meet their deficit needs as opposed to going into front line care for our children. This government chose to make cuts to children's aid societies that resulted in the layoff of workers.

It's important for Ontarians to understand the nature of this deathbed repentance. That's what it's all about. On this government's watch there have been cuts to many programs designed specifically to help children, but especially children growing up at risk, and this government has done nothing to this point in time other than cause them anxiety, anguish, pain and suffering as a result of cuts to programs those kids need.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): We will be pleased to finally pass this bill which we have been advocating for since 1995. We have been after this government to stand up for children since 1995. We find it amazing that the Premier has suddenly found religion in the 11th hour of his mandate, that he can stand beside Dr Mustard, a known and respected expert in the field of children, and say that Dr Mustard suddenly has groundbreaking evidence in the treatment of children. It may well have been groundbreaking in 1962, but not today. In fact, all of the things that he is now espousing are things we have advocated for the last four years.

Speaking specifically of this bill for children at risk, Premier, I ask you to think very seriously about the things you did through 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, and even this year, where children do not have the kind of intervention services that are required so that they don't get into the hands of children's aid societies, so that there are treatment beds and day programs available for families and their children so they never have to get into the hands of the children's aid societies. I ask you to seriously think about that as we go forward with this bill.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I look forward to having the opportunity to debate and see passage of this bill next Monday night. I want to say on the record, however, how disappointed I am with the minister and her government in the way in which this bill has been handled. For a bill of such important public policy, of such important ramifications for vulnerable children in our province, the political games that have been played are little beyond disgusting. I remember asking on many occasions last fall for the bill to proceed with second reading debate; it was never called.

I urged public hearings because there were people who came forward who made the point on both sides of the issue, in support of stronger positions in the bill or had a concern about the appropriate balance. There's not been an opportunity, outside of the expert panel process, for others to comment. The minister, in her wisdom, refused to have hearings at that time, and as we know, the bill was bungled and died on the order paper in December when the House adjourned.

I wrote to her in January. I asked for the opportunity for the intercession to be used constructively so that the members of the standing committee on social development could voluntarily meet to have public hearings on this bill, to hear from people. The minister responded in March, didn't even acknowledge my request and simply said, "There's been enough debate."

Then, later in March, when the Premier said the House wasn't being brought back on schedule and would be coming back in April, I wrote to her again and said: "We have one more month. Let's have your parliamentary assistants, the Liberal critic and myself join together and hold hearings on this, hear from people on this." Again, that request was ignored. Here we are now and we are told now, because of the government's political, electoral agenda, that if this is not passed without any debate in this House, without any appropriate consideration of major public policy, it will die once again, and children, as a result of that, will be put at risk.

We are not prepared to let that happen and so we will participate in having this bill passed in an expeditious way, but not without raising concerns we have. It is not that the minister came forward with all of the recommendations of the expert panel; in fact, she cherry-picked. There are a number of recommendations that are not here. It is a complete betrayal of those in the adoption community, whom she promised that, if the Child and Family Services Act was ever reopened, she would deal with the issue of adoption disclosure, and that is not here.

It is a complete betrayal of persons in the first nations, who were once again inadequately consulted. Although the amendments that are here don't deal specifically with the native child and family services and child welfare provisions, once again they are left fearing that greater intervention on the part of governments and on the part of children's aid societies outside of their culture will bring upon and visit upon their community greater intervention and children of native families being taken from their communities.

They have a right, based on experience, to that fear. They have a right to have someone stand up and debate that and bring forward amendments. My leader will be speaking to that. My leader will be bringing forward amendments with respect to that area.

There are provisions in this bill that we agree to. We agree to the expansion of grounds and the addition of neglect as grounds for intervention. We agree with trying to strike a better balance. But we think a balance must be there, and we have to point out that this government's balance on the other side, of support for positive parenting, is so lacking.

When I look at the Mustard report, when I see the hope and vision that is there, I feel sad knowing that this is not a government that will see that through to its end; that it has spent all of its time commenting trying to shift the responsibility to the private sector, trying to say that government doesn't have a leading role to take. And when I look at what they're doing in terms of new tools, risk assessment tools and other sorts of things and the money the minister says is there to support them, I see that as late as last week children's aid societies still hadn't had confirmation of their budgets. We've still not been able to get a full explanation of the new funding formula. I've asked the minister on a number of occasions; it has not been forthcoming.

This is a sad, sad time in terms of public policy debate, in terms of appropriate dealing with major areas of such importance to our children. I think it is shameful the way the government has conducted itself with respect to this bill.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Briefly, I want to raise a significant issue that is a real problem. The government has had basically five or six months when it could have gone out there and it could have sat down and held some consultations and some discussions with those people who will have to work with this legislation and those people who will be affected by it. But the government has done none of that.

I want to put the minister on notice that native child and family service agencies across this province feel that not only are you not providing them with the tools they need to handle their difficult challenges; in fact, you will be taking away some of the tools that they have found most useful in terms of dealing with their difficult challenges. I say to the minister, you still have some time to talk to them and listen to them and bring in some amendments that will make this better legislation, instead of flawed legislation, which it is now.

LEGISLATIVE PAGES

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce to the Parliament the 18th group of pages to serve in this 36th Parliament: Kevin Caners, from Leeds-Grenville; Brett Carroll, from Grey-Owen Sound; Ashley Challinor, from Halton North; Stephanie Di Giuseppe, from Eglinton; John Doan, from Sault Ste Marie; Anja Dobri, from Northumberland;

Hugh Dowell, from Windsor-Walkerville; Tyler Frook, from Bruce; Shaughnessy Hawkins, from Parry Sound; Erin Holko, from Burlington South; Ian Johnston, from Huron; Susie Kruzlics, from Kitchener-Wilmot; Alex Mouret, from Wellington; Katherine Oksanen, from Fort William; Linas Paskauskas, from High Park-Swansea; Jeremy Range, from Durham-York; Matthew Reid, from Algoma; Paula Robertson, from Durham Centre; Katie Trebuss, from Don Mills; and Whitney Young, from Mississauga North.

Enjoy your time here.

LENGTH OF MOTIONS

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Before we start, I've got a brief bit of housekeeping. I would briefly like to draw members' attention to a note on your desks from me about order paper motions and resolutions. I and the clerks — mostly the clerks — have been concerned in the past about the length of some of the motions that have been put on the order paper, specifically about the very long preambles in some of them.

As I say in the note on your desk, I think the start of the new session is a good time to draw members' attention to our rules about long preambles and recitals. Simply put, they are out of order. Beginning today, I am asking all members to comply with the direction to refrain from using these long preambles and recitals, such as this.

Order paper motions consistent with standing orders: I want to make it clear now, in fairness to all members, that I will remove out-of-order motions from the order paper.

As always, the table is available to assist you with drafting advice. I encourage you to consult the clerks if you have any questions, because I don't know what they're talking about. Thank you very much.

1430

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is for the Premier. Last week I was at the Hamilton general hospital where a man, an 87-year-old father, died on a stretcher in an emergency room. He spent, in fact, the last two and a half days of his life in an emergency room lying on a stretcher because there were no beds available and there was a shortage of nurses. His daughters were left to grieve their father's death in a busy emergency ward. My question to you, Premier, is, why is it that you can find 100 million taxpayer dollars to spend in an advertising propaganda campaign but you couldn't find enough money for this man to have a bed in a hospital?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I ask the Minister of Health.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the member knows, this was a very unfortunate situation. As the Leader of the Opposition also knows, unfortunately emergency room issues are not new issues. We have numerous examples. But our government has been working very actively in order to ensure that emergency room pressures can be addressed.

As you know, we set up a task force and the task force did identify recommendations. We are presently moving forward. As you know, we have invested \$75 million into expanding the capacity within the emergency rooms. We also have set up 1,700 interim long-term-care beds because much of the problem in the emergency rooms is the fact that previous governments didn't construct long-term-care beds for about 10 years.

Mr McGuinty: This week, the first of what are expected to be many schools made a stunning announcement: There is no money to replace sick teachers. At Broadview public school, which is the region's biggest primary school, they have now announced that when a class's regular teacher is sick, instead of a supply teacher coming in and following the lesson plan, these children will be divided up among the other school classes. What it means is that some students who are in grade 3 will be stuck in grade 6 and some in grade 6 will be transferred to grade 1.

My question again, Premier: Why is it that you can spend 100 million taxpayer dollars on your propaganda campaign but you can't find enough money to ensure that primary school children in Ontario have access to a supply teacher?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I ask the Minister of Education to respond.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I am pleased to indicate to the Leader of the Opposition that this government has protected classroom funding, has increased classroom funding. For the first time in the history of Ontario more of the monies are going into the classroom. Those funds are protected and they're fair across the province so that each and every board in Ontario has equal access to funds for teachers, supply teachers, textbooks etc. We allocate those funds to each board in question, in this case the Ottawa board. The Ottawa board makes its decisions on how to spend that particular money, and I hope they're spending it to the maximum benefit of the students of Ontario.

Mr McGuinty: I spent a lot of time during the inter-session travelling around Ontario, and people have been asking me to put questions to you. You like to talk the talk when it comes to accountability and responsibility. Well, here's your chance. Here's another question, and you'll have the opportunity to stand up and answer it.

You're closing schools in Toronto. You're cutting special education in Durham and in Ottawa. You're sending cancer patients to Detroit and Buffalo. You're telling our cancer patients that they can't get treatment by the four-week mark, as recommended by their doctors,

but they'll have to wait 16 or 17 weeks. Women are going to have to travel from Toronto to deliver their babies hundreds of kilometres away in Kingston and in Windsor. We have patients who are stacked up like cordwood in our hospital corridors in Ontario.

The facts speak for themselves. You are not interested in the health care and education of Ontarians; you are concerned about your re-election bid. Stand up today and simply admit that health care and education are not your priorities. Your re-election efforts are the only thing you're focusing on these days.

Hon David Johnson: In fact, health care and education are the two top priorities of this government. That's why this government has invested more money in health care — up to almost \$19 billion today — and more money in education, over \$15 billion in our elementary and secondary schools.

I will agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the facts do speak for themselves. Here is a fact in the province of Ontario: Between the years 1985 and 1989-90, talking about school closings, 37 schools closed in Toronto under the David Peterson Liberal government. Across the province of Ontario, 168 schools closed under the David Peterson Liberal government. Those facts speak for themselves.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier. I think it's perfectly clear where your priorities lie, and they're not the same priorities that are shared by the people of this province. Why not, Premier, since you've decided to spend 100 million taxpayer dollars on your advertising campaign, a veritable orgy of advertising that we are witness to in this province — \$100 million, just so you know, could have hired 2,200 nurses for our hospitals; it could have put 50,000 badly needed computers into our schools.

Premier, why don't you simply dispense with this charade, whether we're talking about the throne speech, the budget, the legislation you introduced today or plan to introduce over the next couple of weeks? Why don't you dispense with the charade and get on with the election? Stand up today and tell us that we're going to have an election so we can put these issues before the people of this province.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I appreciate very much, as do our ministers, the opportunity to talk about health care, to talk about education, to talk about how, in spite of the fact that your federal cousins slashed health care to the province, we were able to increase it \$1.5 billion; how, in spite of the fact that we inherited an \$11-billion deficit, we've been able to get \$500 million more into the classroom; how we've increased funding for junior kindergarten; how we have 18,000 more children in junior kindergarten today than when we took office. I might say that we will be happy, sometime over the next 14 months, to take these issues before the people of Ontario. Right now, we believe Ontarians are still over-

taxed after 10 years of Liberal and NDP governments, and there's more to do to get more Ontarians working.

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Mr McGuinty: The campaign is underway. You know it and I know it. You're spending taxpayer dollars right now. You're running ads on TV right now, radio ads right now, newspaper ads right now, pamphlets and brochures dropped at our doorsteps today: \$100 million worth of campaigning is underway now. You're trying to distort and misinform the Ontario public about your record. Nobody's buying it.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): You can't make those accusations. Please withdraw.

Mr McGuinty: I withdraw "misinform."

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): The outright lying campaign.

The Speaker: Member for Ottawa Centre, that's out of order. I would want you to withdraw that comment.

Mr Patten: I withdraw it.

Mr McGuinty: Your advertising campaign, your propaganda blitz, is not working. Why not do the honest thing and stand up and tell the people of this province that we're going to have an election and we're going to have it now?

Hon Mr Harris: I think I've been very upfront with the people of the province of Ontario. The normal comment I hear across the province, even from those who disagree with our agenda, is: "At least you did honestly exactly what you said you were going to do. At least you did that."

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Member for Scarborough-Agincourt, come to order. You too, members for Sudbury and St Catharines.

Hon Mr Harris: I've also heard as I've travelled around the province, "Thank goodness we had the kind of strong leadership that we see only in you, Premier." That's what I have heard as I've talked to people over the last four years.

Clearly, rather than have a budget that I hope has the capacity to cut yet more taxes so we can create even more jobs and make this jurisdiction even more competitive, you seem to want to have an election. I can tell you that in the fullness of time, sometime in the next 14 months, there will be an election.

In the meantime, when I hear you talk about the kind of reductions we've made — we have made reductions. We've increased health care spending, we've increased education in the classroom, but we did make a big cut: We cut government advertising from \$277 million that you guys spent in five years.

Mr McGuinty: You know the Premier is in big trouble when he starts believing his own releases. He's starting to believe his own propaganda. Maybe we should just take the time to review the Premier's record for him.

He said he wasn't going to close any hospitals. He's closing one out of five. He said he wouldn't take any money out of health care. He's cut our hospital budgets by \$800 million. He said he wouldn't touch our chil-

dren's classrooms in Ontario. He's cut them by \$1 billion. We've lost junior kindergarten programs, special education programs, English-as-a-second-language programs, adult education programs.

He said he'd never introduce user fees. Our seniors are facing user fees in this province today. He said that downloading would be revenue-neutral. Every municipality in this province knows that is not true.

Premier, stand up now and do the right thing. Let's take this to the people of this province. Let's have an election.

Hon Mr Harris: I think those who are involved in delivering services to the people have seen a massive increase in books in the classroom; they've seen increases in junior kindergarten funding; they've seen more junior kindergarten spaces. They have seen as well reductions, and it has taken strong leadership to deal with an \$11-billion deficit and cut the fat and waste out of the 10-year legacy of the Liberals and the NDP. Where have the biggest reductions been? In taxes, opposed by the Liberals and the NDP; reductions in the number of politicians, opposed by the Liberals and the NDP; reductions in government advertising — \$277 million by the Liberals, \$238 million by the NDP, \$148 million over the life of this government. So yes, we've cut out a lot of the fat and a lot of the waste.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Members, come to order. Member for Lake Nipigon, come to order now.

Premier.

Hon Mr Harris: Clearly, Mr Speaker, judging from all the screaming and yelling, which is what the opposition parties are the best at, they don't like the fact that there are fewer politicians, they don't like the fact that we've cut out the wasteful spending, and they don't like the fact that we've reduced taxes or we've reduced the deficit. Quite frankly, Ontarians are a lot happier that there are over 540,000 new jobs in Ontario and that this province is not only strong as the result of the strong leadership we've provided, it's getting stronger and stronger every day.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): A question for the Premier. Premier, this is a health care question, one that you didn't include in your television propaganda ads. Ten days ago a man named Kim Ginter was admitted to the emergency ward at Queensway hospital with a life-threatening pancreas infection. He had to stay in the emergency ward bed for 48 hours because there were no beds in the intensive care unit. Kim Ginter's story is a story we hear all across Ontario, not the stuff that's in your propaganda ads. His is the real story.

Premier, why should Kim Ginter be forced to wait in an emergency ward for 48 hours with his life hanging in the balance so you can give a tax cut to the wealthiest people in Ontario?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Premier.

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): Mr Speaker, I know the Minister of Health —

The Speaker: Minister of Health.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): That's why we are ensuring that the pressures in the emergency rooms are being addressed. As you know, this has been a long-standing problem. Our government has recognized that it is a long-standing problem, and that is why we have invested and are investing an additional \$225 million to deal with the problem. That's why emergency room construction and renovations are being fast-tracked by our government, and that's why we are increasing the capacity in the emergency rooms by 18%. We are making the difficult decisions that have been put off because we know there are situations such as this that need to be addressed.

Mr Hampton: My supplementary is to the Premier as well. The Premier has so much to say, but when he's held accountable he suddenly doesn't want to answer.

Kim Ginter's story doesn't end in the emergency ward at Queensway-Carleton. Since last Wednesday, six days ago, doctors at Queensway have been trying to get Kim Ginter admitted to the intensive care unit at Toronto General Hospital, the only hospital in Ontario that can care for him. By Wednesday night his condition was so bad that family and friends were sent for. He was dying.

Premier, they're still trying to find a bed for him in the intensive care unit at Toronto General, even while his life is in the balance, but they can't find the bed.

Today we learned from the Toronto Globe and Mail that your income tax scheme has given the five wealthiest men in Ontario \$4.8 million through your tax cut. Why are the five wealthiest men in Ontario getting \$4.8 million from your government when Kim Ginter can't get the bed he needs at Queensway hospital, can't get the bed he needs at Toronto General Hospital?

1450

Hon Mrs Witmer: As you well know, it is our government that has introduced for those individuals who are earning more money the fair share health levy, so people who are earning more today are also contributing a greater share to make sure that people throughout this province have the enhanced health services that we are making available. As you know, we are expanding services and we are providing more services than ever before to respond to the needs of people everywhere.

Mr Hampton: Here's the true story. Peter Monk, who has an income of \$39 million a year, will get \$1.3 million through your income tax scheme. Richard Cleary, who has an income of \$34 million, will get \$1.2 million. Frank Stronach, who has an income of \$26 million, will get almost a million from your income tax scheme. Meanwhile, when you call Toronto General Hospital, they will say: "Sorry, we don't have a bed. We know we're the only hospital that can provide the care that this man needs. We know his life is hanging in the balance, but we don't have the beds. We don't have the nurses. Our budget has been cut. Money has been taken out of health care to finance Mr Harris's income tax scheme."

I want to know from you, Premier, since you want to talk about it all the time: What happens to Kim Ginter, who can't get the health care he needs now and probably won't be able to get it in the next few days? His life hangs in the balance. The system is failing him. Do you want to tell him about tax cuts? How about the health care he needs?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We would be pleased to follow through.

The Speaker: New question, third party.

Mr Hampton: I guess the response from this government is they want to talk about tax cuts —

The Speaker: Who is your question to?

Mr Hampton: This is to the Premier as well. They want to talk about the reality of health care.

Premier, another health care question — and this one didn't make it into your ads either. Karen Ford went into Mount Sinai Hospital earlier this month to remove a growth on her thyroid. That's a very invasive surgical procedure. In the past, someone would stay in hospital for three to five days to recover after that, but in Ontario hospitals today, where we don't have enough beds and enough nurses to staff the beds, sick patients are sent home right away. Karen Ford was sent home from hospital the morning after her surgery. She was in pain, she was weak, and she was scared.

You've cut health care to finance the income tax scheme that you talk about so often. Why does Karen Ford have to go home sick and scared and weak while you can afford income tax cuts for the wealthiest people in Ontario?

Hon Mr Harris: The Minister of Health.

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the leader of the third party well knows, those decisions are clinical decisions that are made.

Mr Hampton: Those decisions are not clinical decisions. When you talk to people in hospitals, they will tell you: "We'd like to keep these patients here, we don't want to send them home sicker and quicker, but we can't. We don't have the staff. We don't have the beds. Too much of our budget has been taken away." Instead of monitoring patients like Karen Ford, they are sent home quicker and sicker.

Six days after she was sent home, she went back to the hospital to have the stitches removed. When the nurse saw her, she said: "We can't deal with your situation right now. You have a very serious staph infection in the surgical wound."

Premier, do you think Karen Ford, now suffering from the staph infection, has suffered enough to finance your cuts to health care so that you can take the money and put it into income tax cuts for the wealthiest people in Ontario? Do you think she has suffered enough now?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the leader well knows, we have not made any cuts to health care whatsoever. We have increased funding from \$17.4 billion to \$18.9 billion. There is only one government that did cut health care spending and that was the federal government. Thanks to the efforts of our Premier, we have seen the federal gov-

ernment recognize the need to restore the cuts. Their share, which at one time was 30 cents on every provincial dollar in 1979, had dropped to seven cents on every provincial dollar until recently, when they did give all of the provinces additional money.

We will continue to respond to the needs of people in this province. In fact, that is what our revitalization of health is all about. We need to respond. We are providing more services than ever before to address the needs and the issues.

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mrs Witmer: The issues are of long standing in this province because previous governments weren't willing to make some of the tough decisions in order to —

The Speaker: Final supplementary.

Mr Hampton: It is a fact that this government has cut more than \$800 million directly from hospital budgets. That's what people like Karen Ford and Kim Ginter are facing when they go to the hospital. That's the reality.

Now, just before an election, you're trying to shovel some of the money back in to make it look good. It's not going to do it, Minister. It's not going to work.

Karen Ford's story doesn't end there. After another examination, they discovered that her thyroid is cancerous. She should have surgery to remove the thyroid, but she can't have surgery until they deal with the staph infection. So she sits at home now, very sick, very scared, very worried, not knowing when she'll be able to have the surgery and not knowing how long this delay is going to affect her long-term health.

The Speaker: Question.

Mr Hampton: Minister, I can give you example after example like this. What are you going to do for all of the citizens of Ontario, who know you've cut the health care system? You've done tremendous damage to it, and now all of your cosmetic ads —

The Speaker: Minister of Health.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Let me again remind you, we have not cut health care. We are spending more today on health services than any government in the history of this province. Moreover, we are addressing the long-standing problems in the system that previous governments were not willing to address.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Hold on.

Minister.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I would remind the leader of the third party about the fact that his party didn't have a plan. I read from the Windsor Star, October 1993: "As the provincial government scrambles to put together a cancer treatment strategy, waiting lists for patients in need get longer."

We do have a plan, and our plan is to ensure that all individuals in this province get the cancer care they need as quickly as possible.

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mrs Witmer: We have invested \$155 million. We have a human resource plan. We have Cancer Care Ontario —

The Speaker: New question. Official opposition; the member for Fort William.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): My question is to the Premier. You cut \$1 billion out of your education budget before you took control over the funding. You wanted to cut more and you backed off because of the public outcry. You said then that there would be no more cuts to education. But in the education grants that you announced two weeks ago, there were more cuts, like the \$33 million more being taken out of adult education because you devastated the programs.

The bottom line of the grants you announced two weeks ago is that they are \$500 million short of what you spent on elementary and secondary school education last year.

Premier, have you cut another half a billion dollars out of education, or are you saving the money for some good-news announcements in next week's budget?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I'll refer it to the Minister of Education.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): Unfortunately, this is just another example of incorrect facts on the part of the Liberal Party of Ontario.

If you recall, at one point they were saying there would be 10,000 teachers fired in the province — wrong; 10,000 fewer teachers in the province — wrong again. Now they're saying 3,500 teachers — wrong again.

In terms of this particular issue, the general grants to the school boards will increase by \$150 million next year. They will not go down; they will increase by \$150 million. Some of that money is in special education and some of that money is for operation and maintenance of accommodation. No board in the Ontario will have fewer operating funds next year than they've had this year, and many boards will have more.

Mrs McLeod: I hope the Premier knows that in the figures released by his own ministry, the difference between the funding in 1998-99 and 1999-2000 is \$560,766,863 less, more than half a billion dollars less that at this point in time you're planning to spend on elementary and secondary education than you spent last year. There are thousands more students coming to school in September and you're planning to spend less money. Some of the cuts leap out at you, like the fact you're going to spend \$66 million less on your early learning grant that the Premier was trumpeting last week as his answer to the Fraser Mustard report. How can you justify \$66 million less in early learning?

Minister, I ask you: Are you going to put the full half a billion dollars that you're short back into elementary and secondary school education in the budget next week and will you ensure that it will go back into the programs

you've devastated, like adult education and junior kindergarten and funding for kids in the early grades of school?

Hon David Johnson: Again I would encourage the member opposite to get her facts straight. The early learning grant is combined with junior kindergarten because now 68 out of 72 boards in the province have junior kindergarten. Because the number of junior kindergarten students has gone way up by some 17,000, the funding is coming out of junior kindergarten. Get it straight. You have to look at the two of them together.

I would say to the member opposite that when she checks her facts again she will find out that the support from this government to the school boards across Ontario has gone up by \$150 million, that in fact every board will have at least as much money next year as they had this year and many boards will have more money — stronger support from this government.

1500

CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTRES

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): A question for the Premier again: This concerns children across Ontario with multiple disabilities, children from infancy to adolescence who need health care services like physiotherapy and speech-language therapy. Ontario's 19 children's treatment centres have been under a funding freeze for five years now pending a review. Today there are 3,600 children waiting for assessment and health care treatment. They are spending anywhere from two months to a year on the waiting list.

Premier, you didn't need to conduct a review before you introduced a tax cut for the wealthiest people in Ontario. The tax cut you are giving to Gerald Schwartz, the CEO of Onex Corp, \$400,000 a year, would provide treatment for every child in Halton and Peel currently on the waiting list. If you stopped giving a tax cut to Charles Baillie, chairman of the Toronto-Dominion Bank, \$300,000, all the children in Durham on the waiting list could be looked after.

You say you now understand the importance of early childhood education and development. What's more important here, a tax cut for the wealthiest or treatment for those children?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): I guess there are two parts to the question, one about tax cuts and one about children's services that we of course continue to increase and fund and put more importance on, particularly in the early years. If you'd like details on the children's services, I'd be happy to refer the supplementary to the Minister of Community and Social Services. If you would like details on the tax cuts, it has been our tax cuts that have brought \$5 billion of new revenue to the treasury of the province of Ontario, that have put 540,000 Ontarians to work who were not at work before, that have provided jobs and opportunities for the vast majority of 374,000 Ontarians who are now off the welfare rolls. Were it not for the strong economy that we're providing, we wouldn't be able to put all the billions of

additional dollars into health care and children's services that we are doing.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Premier, right now, 13 of those children's treatment centres under the Ministry of Health have waiting lists of over 3,600 children. Think about that for a moment, what that means in this province. I'm personally really pleased that the review that was initiated by the NDP government is finally taking place five years later, but I've been pushing for that review for two years in this House.

Premier, I've asked you questions on this directly and, in the meantime, their budgets have been frozen for that period of time, and the kids just can't wait. Right now we see treatment equipment that is deteriorating badly. We see the kids who have got service getting less service so that more can be seen, and there are 3,600 to be seen on a waiting list. You know early intervention is important. You just have to look at the Fraser Mustard report and others.

You've got a chance next week with the budget. Please tell us that instead of introducing more tax cuts for the wealthy, you're going to fund the treatment for children in these treatment centres; you're going to give a budget raise to those treatment centres.

Hon Mr Harris: Let me first of all say that nobody doubts the member's or her party's compassion and caring for Ontarians, particularly those who are most disadvantaged, and I respect that. We too share that concern and that caring. That's why we have increased substantially dollars for early childhood interventions, Head Start programs, speech pathology. We've put new money in a lot of areas, and this was applauded by the Mustard-McCain study that said, "Yes, the government is on the right track with these significant increases in funding."

I would say this, though, to the member: You and your party and I in our party disagree on whether we should have a massive deficit as we head, after the legacy of the Liberals and the NDP —

The Speaker: Answer, please.

Hon Mr Harris: — or whether we should have the massive high taxes that the Liberals brought us. We happen to believe that lower tax rates to create jobs and produce an increase in the growth of the economy are what had allowed us to be as compassionate as we —

The Speaker: New question.

ONTARIO 2000

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. My constituents and all Ontarians are getting very excited about the dawn of the new millennium, just 247 days away. It will be a tremendous opportunity to showcase the progress the province has made and to celebrate our position as one of the premier jurisdictions on the face of the earth.

In my riding of Scarborough East, the community has planned a wide range of cultural events under the heading of "Scarborough East Festival 2000," with the goal of including all residents, young and old, in the celebrations.

During the legislative recess, in fact, on New Year's Day, you launched an initiative called Ontario 2000. Could you please tell the House what kind of response the government has received about the Ontario 2000 program.

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): I want to say that we've got a tremendous response about the Ontario 2000 program. We want to include all Ontarians in this program, as I'm sure the member for Scarborough East knows. One of our programs was to engage our youth, and the My Ontario initiative is a perfect example of this idea. We've invited Ontario's 2.1 million elementary and high school students to create in words and pictures their vision of what Ontario will be like in the year 2020 and what they'll do or what they would do to make that vision a reality. I want to point out that the deadline for these submissions is this coming Friday, so get your submissions in. We're then going to publish all the reports, the special ones, in a book of selected works and distribute it to every school and library in the province. It's certainly a welcome tribute to the millennium.

Mr Gilchrist: I appreciate the timeliness of your suggestion to get those notices in.

I know most communities have begun their planning for the millennium celebrations, but for those who desire further information, could you please tell the House how Ontarians can find out more about the Ontario 2000 program.

Hon Ms Bassett: I thank the member for Scarborough East because, as you know, anybody who wants information from government sometimes has difficulty finding out the route to go. Our millennium office is based right here in Toronto. The toll-free number, and I'm going to read it, is 1-877-464-0444, and I'd certainly encourage all Ontarians to visit the Web site at www.Ontario2000.on.ca.

I'm also pleased to inform the House that since the Web site was launched in January, it's received more than 450,000 hits from across the province, the country and around the world. Visitors to the site can tap in and share their plans for New Year's Eve, or they can link to the millennium sites of other provinces and find out what towns right across the country are doing for the millennium celebrations.

1510

HIGHWAY 407

Mr Joseph Cordiano (Lawrence): I have a question for the minister for privatization. When you sold Highway 407, you sold out the people of the 905 region with it — they're the ones who use it most — because you have condemned them to 99 years of tolls. That amounts

to not one generation of toll-payers but three generations of toll-payers in this province.

This privatization is unprecedented. It's the largest in the history of this country, and yet you went ahead with the finalization of this deal without this Legislature and the people of this province having any say whatsoever. This was nothing but a quick sale designed to pump \$1.6 billion into your re-election campaign. The details of this deal were not even revealed. How, Minister, can anyone believe you acted in the best interests of this province?

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]): I thank the member opposite for the question. He calls this transaction unprecedented. I would agree it is unprecedented that you would find a government that's prepared to find the appropriate partnership with the private sector that will create 6,000 jobs as the road is built, that will build the extensions on the east and the west components — plans, by the way, that you objected to and plans, by the way, that the previous government was not prepared to deal with — a relationship that will expand the lanes at no additional cost to taxpayers, plans that you objected to because you opposed the bill, plans that the previous government was not prepared to include in its design of the highway.

It's indeed unprecedented that we have a province here and an economic performance in the province that will attract the sizable investment that has come from outside of Canada into this province, clearly indicating that this province is indeed in business.

Mr Cordiano: During the election campaign, Minister, you set out a clear plan for the privatization of public assets. Just in case you've forgotten, I want to quote what you said in the last campaign. You promised, "The entire process will be open to scrutiny by the Legislature and the public."

Minister, before it's too late, why don't you honour that commitment to the people of this province. Bring this deal out of the secrecy you've shrouded it in. Let this Legislature examine the details of this deal before it closes. If you won't do that, why won't you let the Provincial Auditor of Ontario scrutinize this deal before it becomes final?

Hon Mr Sampson: Apparently another plank in the Liberal platform is now coming out, where they intend to direct the auditor of this province on what business he can or cannot audit. He's quite prepared and quite welcome to audit this transaction, should he wish. But in order to ensure we had a transaction that was fair and equitable to everyone, we engaged an outside, independent consultant to audit this process through every piece of the transaction; not at the end but right from the beginning of the transaction through every step of the transaction, right to the completion. That audit report has been made available to you and if you and your research staff want to have another copy, I'd be more than happy to send it to you.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Premier, another health care question for you; again, this wasn't covered in your propaganda ad campaign.

One of the first things you did when you became government was to cut funding for cancer treatment. That money we know was taken to finance your income tax scheme. As a result of cuts to cancer treatment, patients now can't get the cancer treatment they need, and we now read of cancer patients being sent from southern Ontario to the United States, even to Thunder Bay. We understand that when cancer patients are sent to Thunder Bay, on the eve of an election, your government is paying the full shot: full air fare, hotels, meals, accommodation, everything. When a patient is sent from northern Ontario to southern Ontario for treatment, they receive a travel grant of \$420 or less. That doesn't even cover the cost of air fare.

Premier, can you explain why patients are treated differently depending on whether they're from southern Ontario or northern Ontario?

Hon Michael D. Harris (Premier): First of all, let me correct the record. We have increased the funding for cancer care every year in every budget, with every minister and every budget the minister has brought forward. As you know, the whole area of incidence of cancer is on the increase. With an aging population, it is a huge and very difficult challenge for us. That's why we have constantly increased funding for cancer care.

We also are increasing funding for resources. However, if there is ever an occasion where we do not have 100% of the resources 100% of the time for every treatment, our commitment is to fund that, universally accessible to all Ontarians, where we can find those services. On an interim basis, we are finding some in the United States, which is not our first choice, but I'm surprised that you're perhaps suggesting it shouldn't be any choice. We happen to think that this care is appropriate and helps us meet the commitment to appropriate cancer care, wherever it is available, when it's required.

Mr Hampton: Premier, despite your propaganda campaign and despite your attempts recently to shovel money out the back end of the truck to cover your cuts, it is a fact. Cancer Care Ontario pointed out that your government cut the badly needed funding for cancer treatment in this province as soon as you took office. It is a fact, and Cancer Care Ontario announced it last year, that patients are being sent to the United States because they can't get the treatment here, and some patients in southern Ontario are being sent to Thunder Bay. It is a fact that on the eve of an election you're doling out the money to cover all the costs for someone who has to be sent from southern Ontario to Thunder Bay for treatment, but somebody coming the other way is told, "You get \$420, even if it doesn't cover the air fare, even if you have to scrounge out of your own pocket for a hotel room, even if you have to scrounge out of your own pocket to pay all the other things."

Premier, why the inequality? Why, on the eve of an election, can you do one thing for people from southern Ontario but people in the north are told, "No, you find the money out of your own pocket if you need health treatment"?

Hon Mr Harris: The only ones who seem to be talking about the eve of an election are you and the Liberals. I don't know why you're not interested in a budget, in more tax cuts to create more jobs and yet even more dollars for health care. Quite frankly, for you to stand up and criticize a program to ensure that we give appropriate cancer care to all Ontarians I find rather shocking. It is not consistent with the kind of caring that has been demonstrated by your party over most of its history in this province. Perhaps it explains why you've gone from first to third so quickly and perhaps it explains why you don't seem to be capturing much imagination.

The fact of the matter is, this government has done far more for health care in restructuring and more for cancer care. We will make care available to all citizens on an equal basis at every opportunity, and you know that.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Members for London Centre and Sudbury East, come to order.

Interjection.

The Speaker: And Lake Nipigon.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Order. I was going to debate you there for a minute.

Interjection.

The Speaker: That could be debatable.

New question, member for Niagara South.

1520

TELEMARKETING PRACTICES

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. I'm very concerned about some phone calls I received recently in the constituency office about a telephone scam in Niagara. The constituents related a story where somebody would call them at home, pretending to be a bank manager. They would ask the constituent to withdraw money from their account and then meet them at a specified location shortly thereafter.

My question for the minister is, what is the ministry doing to help fight such fraudulent activity in Niagara and throughout the rest of the province?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): I thank the member for Niagara South for the question. Telemarketing fraud is a very difficult issue for many seniors. We should have absolutely no mercy on these scam artists who do these things across the province.

The ministry has had a leading role, a very active role, in trying to combat telemarketing fraud. Through the initiative of Phonebusters, an OPP initiative, we have a number of partners in the private sector who have acted with us to try to make telemarketing fraud more public so

we know all about it, so we can educate people and so we can combat it too.

One of the partners is the Canadian Bankers Association, which is very relevant to the question the member for Niagara South is asking, because what happens quite often is that someone — a senior, for example — breaks their normal pattern and decides to withdraw a huge amount of money, and goes to the bank. Of course, the banker will know it's an unusual amount for them to withdraw and they then alert the police. This is a very important initiative that we sponsor.

Aside from that fact, we took the lead as well at the provincial ministers' conference, and as a result of that a number of other provinces are joining with us to do this combat.

Mr Hudak: It seems like this phone scam, among others that have been related to my office, is targeting predominantly seniors. In fact, when we were in Smithville last week with the Crime Control Commission, a group of seniors related their particular concern, the number of phone calls and the kinds of phone scams that were targeting seniors in the West Lincoln area as well.

My concern is, what is done to alert seniors, who are predominantly being chosen as the targets for phone scams, to be extra cautious when getting these kinds of solicitations for money via the telephone?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: First of all, the majority of people who are scammed in the province of Ontario by telemarketing fraud are seniors. That's why it's very important for us to really grab on to some initiatives.

A short while ago we had what's known as a reverse boiler room. We called it Hang Up on Fraud. We had dozens of volunteers, and Minister Cam Jackson joined me in this initiative on this day. We called a number of people who were on these lists that people call to alert them to the problems with telemarketing fraud, to make them more aware of the situation. During the course of the day, there were three specific events that were stopped, because seniors were in fact going to write huge cheques to people to get a prize. Of course, it goes without saying that if you don't enter a contest you can't win a prize, and if something is too good to be true, it really is.

It really hits home, because that day I talked to a gentleman who had just lost his wife and he had been scammed by one of these companies for over \$100,000. He volunteered that day so he could then convey the message as well, to prevent other seniors from being impacted like that.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): My question is to the Minister of Education. The Toronto Catholic schools have a serious problem. Once again, as a result of your 100-square-foot funding formula, children in schools are being shortchanged. Because of your unworkable formula, the Toronto Catholic school board finds itself \$100 million short. This is the same Toronto Catholic board

that you and the Premier praised last year as the model of efficiency. On November 3 you said: "If the Toronto public school board pursued the same methods of efficiency that the Catholic board had, they would save almost \$80 million a year." Now this very efficient board that you've praised in November finds itself in deep trouble, being short \$100 million to do their job properly.

Minister, will you admit that your funding formula was a disaster last year for the Toronto public schools, and that it is now a continuing disaster for the Toronto Catholic schools? Will you do the right thing? Scrap your formula and give the schools the money they need to educate the children.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): What I will admit to is that the approach we've taken to funding, for the first time in the province of Ontario, guarantees that each and every student all across this province will have a fair and equal opportunity, not just students in certain boards. I'll also say that the approach we've taken to funding will put more dollars where it counts. A couple of years ago, probably five or six years ago now, a former Liberal cabinet minister by the name of John Sweeney did a study at the request of the NDP government, and I credit them for doing that study. He said, "Too much money is being spent outside of the classroom." We agree with Mr Sweeney. That's why we've changed the formula to put more money in the classroom.

In the case of the Toronto Catholic District School Board, they received about \$11 million extra this year than they did in the last complete year, and next year again they will receive more money.

I believe that board can stay within budget and provide a first-class education to the students of the city of Toronto.

Mr Colle: Maybe the minister should come to Cardinal Carter Academy at 7 o'clock tonight and tell the Catholic parents, children and teachers that everything is OK. They don't believe your formula because they are \$100 million short. This was the formula that was supposed to bring them up to a level — in fact, it's got them into a deeper hole than last year. Your figures don't add up, Minister.

This is the board where you and the Premier stood in this House in November saying that they were the model of efficiency. Now the parents and trustees are saying that they are fed up. Enough is enough. Catholic parents are fed up with excuses. Our children are being shortchanged.

Come tonight to Cardinal Carter and tell them how your wonderful formula is helping Catholic education.

Hon David Johnson: I would say that in a number of ways I have great confidence that education will improve for this particular board. One example is that this year there will be a flow of money, almost \$13 million, to the Toronto Catholic board for new schools, and that's a flow of money to pay the mortgage payments. Next year, there will be some \$20 million to this board for the construction of new schools. Consequently, you will see in

the Catholic system right here in the city of Toronto a huge construction program. I can assure you that this board is not \$100 million short in terms of their particular money.

I have written to the chair of the Toronto Catholic school board and offered to do an independent audit. I have offered to work together with the Catholic board to do an independent audit to look at the numbers, to look at the figures, to ensure that this Catholic board has fair funding. We've offered to do that for every board and we're going to do it with the Toronto public board. We're very close to signing an agreement —

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. I can't hear the answer. Member for Oriole, member for Oakwood, come to order.

Minister of Education.

Hon David Johnson: We've offered this to every board in Ontario. We've offered it to the Toronto public board, we're in the process of doing it with the Toronto public board, and I've offered it to the Toronto Catholic board: Bring in an independent third party, let's look at the numbers and let's see where the facts lie. I'm confident that when we do that, we'll find out that they have more than adequate funding.

1530

HOMELESSNESS

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is to the Minister of Housing. Last month I went out to the Scarborough motel strip, where your government in effect tries to hide away families with children who don't have a home. As you know, there are close to 1,000 children and families there who do not have a home and that's where you're putting them — no house, a one-room hotel room in the motel strip.

Your government cut the funding for affordable housing. You did away with all of it. That's why these families are homeless. The private sector will not build homes for modest- and lower-income families. The Anne Golden report tells us that the people who are more and more on the list of the homeless are families with children. At the same time that you cut affordable housing, the five highest-paid executives in Ontario will get from your government \$5.4 million out of your income tax cut.

Minister, can you tell me why it's more important to give those executives such a big tax cut?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I'll refer this question to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I would like to challenge the leader of the third party. Would he like us to remove the tax cut from the 655,000 low-income families out there today who do not have to pay Ontario income tax at all? That is more money in their pockets because of our tax cuts, and that's more money for them to help support their children.

The other thing — I would like to make a point — is that we recognize that here in Toronto there is indeed a significant problem with homelessness. That's why I went to the summit meeting Mayor Lastman called several weeks ago. We'll be meeting again. We took forward some new initiatives which the mayor felt would be extremely helpful: more money and the flowing of money to municipalities in different ways. For example, we have increased the community start-up grant for families so that we can move them out of those hotels. We've taken a number of steps to help people who find themselves homeless.

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion with respect to the agreed-upon procedure for consideration of the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move that the members moving and seconding the throne speech motion shall be provided with the time remaining after routine proceedings for this sessional day. In the event that all of the time remaining until 6 pm is not used, the debate shall be adjourned and the House shall be adjourned until 6:30 pm this evening;

That the speech of the leader of the official opposition shall be stood down until tomorrow afternoon when he shall be allotted the time remaining after routine proceedings until 6 pm to make remarks with respect to the throne speech motion. In the event that all of the time remaining until 6 pm is not used, the debate shall be adjourned and the House shall be adjourned until 6:30 pm Tuesday evening;

That the speech of the leader of the third party shall be stood down until Wednesday afternoon when he shall be allotted the time remaining after routine proceedings until 6 pm to make remarks with respect to the throne speech motion. In the event that all of the time remaining until 6 pm is not used, the debate shall be adjourned and the House shall be adjourned until 6:30 pm Wednesday evening; and

That the debate shall rotate among the three recognized parties in the House during debate on the throne speech this evening and tomorrow evening and for all consideration following the remarks of the leader of the third party.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): You've heard Mr Sterling's resolution. Is it agreed? It is agreed.

PETITIONS

RECYCLING

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I have petitions from a group of students at St Sylvester who presented them to Mr Curling and myself. It says:

"We, the undersigned, beg leave to petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the government of Ontario should be seeking the best methods of preserving our environment for future generations; and

"Whereas one proven method is to reduce waste by reusing and recycling materials; and

"Whereas one area that benefits from this method is PET, plastic pop bottles; and

"Whereas Ontario regulations 340 and 357 say that 30% of pop has to be sold in refillable bottles; and

"Whereas soft drink manufacturers are not following these regulations;

"Whereas recycling one-way PET bottles is a good start to achieving environmental protection;

"Whereas using a refillable PET bottle would save taxpayers money; and

"Whereas a refillable PET bottle can be reused 25 times; and

"Whereas this would use 90% less energy, natural resources and create 90% less pollution; and

"Whereas we have only 45 years left of using oil and natural gas; and

"Whereas over one billion one-way current PET bottles show up in landfill each year; and

"Whereas using a deposit-return system is the most economical, environmentally responsible way to sell pop;

"Therefore, be it resolved, for the sake of our environment, that legislation be passed requiring soft drink manufacturers to use refillable PET bottles."

This petition has been collected by these young students. We have well over 3,000 signatures here. On behalf of myself and my colleague Mr Curling, I'm pleased to present it and to sign this petition in support.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition addressed to the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"We, the undersigned citizens of Hamilton and the surrounding communities, beg leave to petition the government of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has announced the closure of the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario, through the Health Services Restructuring Commission, is divesting its responsibilities for mental health care without any consultation with the people of Hamilton-Wentworth; and

"Whereas the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital has a reputation for excellence and is a leader in providing

mental health care services and many unique programs; and

"Whereas in 1998 the American Psychiatric Association awarded their gold award to the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital for its program on mood disorders; and

"Whereas both city and regional councils oppose the closure and more than 30,000 people have signed petitions opposing the hospital's closure; and

"Whereas the people of Hamilton-Wentworth will pay the price when the Harris government shuts down the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital;

"Therefore we, the people of Hamilton-Wentworth who care about quality, accessible and publicly accountable mental health care, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital site open and deliver the services and programs from that location."

I continue to support those Hamiltonians who want to save the hospital, and I add my name to theirs.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 51 people from across the province.

"Whereas children are exposed to pornography in variety stores and video rental outlets;

"Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposures to pornography;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To enact legislation which will create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to pornography in retail establishments; prevent minors from entering establishments which rent or sell pornography; restrict the location of such establishments to non-residential areas."

AIR QUALITY

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): This is a 10,000-signature petition gathered by the Clean Air Committee of Sudbury and it says:

"Whereas SO₂ emissions from mining and smelting operations remain a serious threat to the health, environment and property of Sudbury citizens;

"Whereas there continues to be ongoing intolerable peaks in levels of SO₂ emissions from mining and smelting operations;

"Whereas the threat of fugitive emissions remains constant to the Sudbury region; and

"Whereas existing government regulations and thresholds for SO₂ emissions may be in need of immediate reassessment;

"Whereas the elimination of 26 regional Ministry of Environment jobs by the Harris government has resulted in lower monitoring effectiveness;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Ontario Legislature to demand that the Mike

Harris government aid the citizens of this community in having these emissions monitored closely and reduced significantly.”

I affix my signature to this petition.

1540

FIRE IN HAMILTON

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas two years ago, Hamilton was the site of one of the worst environmental disasters in Ontario; and

“Whereas the Plastimet fire raged for three days in a residential area of Hamilton, releasing furans, large quantities of heavy metals and other dangerous chemicals and consuming 400 tonnes of plastic, including polyvinyl chloride, PVC, which releases extremely toxic substances, such as dioxins, which are thought to cause cancer and disruptions to endocrine systems; and

“Whereas the city of Hamilton declared a state of emergency and a one-day evacuation of area residents because of fears about airborne toxins; and

“Whereas the government has cut funding to the Ministry of the Environment by more than 35% and laid off more than 750 people who worked to protect the environment; and

“Whereas we urgently need a public inquiry to find whether these cuts played a role in causing the Plastimet fire, whether the evacuation process was adequate, if residents and workers received adequate warning of the danger, are there ways to improve responses to these life-threatening fires and how to prevent the nightmare of other Plastimet fires in all our communities; and

“Whereas for the past two years the Harris Conservative government has steadfastly refused to hold such a public inquiry or listen to municipalities, labour organizations, environmental groups and firefighter organizations, who have all urged the government to hold a public inquiry; and

“Whereas the Harris Conservative government has allowed corporate polluters like Plastimet to operate with virtual impunity in a climate of deregulation or industry self-regulation, along with cuts to monitoring and enforcement mechanisms;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to put the safety and health of the people of Hamilton before the interests of corporate polluters and immediately hold a public inquiry into the Plastimet fire.”

I continue to add my name to these petitioners.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): I have a petition signed by a number of residents of Waterloo region.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas children are exposed to pornography in variety stores and video retail outlets;

“Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposures to pornography;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To enact legislation which will create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to pornography in retail establishments; prevent minors from entering establishments which rent or sell pornography; restrict the location of such establishments to non-residential areas.”

I affix my signature in support of this petition.

TRAFFIC CONTROL

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I have a petition signed by hundreds of my constituents.

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas the Thunder Bay Expressway has been the scene of serious accidents in recent years; and

“Whereas as a result of strong lobbying by the community, including the OPP and Thunder Bay city council, an advance warning light has been installed at Balsam Street; and

“Whereas since the installation of this warning light there has been a major improvement to the safety of that intersection; and

“Whereas to further increase safety on the expressway more warning lights are needed further down the system; and

“Whereas the Balsam Street warning light is in its second year of a three-year pilot project to deem the effectiveness of advance warning lights in the area; and

“Whereas surely two years is enough time to confirm that the advance warning light system has made a positive difference;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to end the three-year pilot project early and assess the results that will show that the Thunder Bay Expressway would greatly benefit and become much safer if a full system of advance warning lights were installed.”

I'm very pleased to sign my signature to that.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and it reads as follows:

“Whereas the government of Ontario has imposed a politically motivated funding formula that will force the closure of hundreds of schools across Ontario;

“Whereas the only reason for the funding formula is to justify removing more than \$1 billion from the education system so that the wealthiest Ontarians can get a tax break;

“Whereas the schools are the heart of our communities and to close schools would be to cut out the heart of our communities;

"Whereas a properly funded, quality education system is critical to the well-being of the children of this province and the future of the province itself;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario scrap the funding formula and save our schools by properly funding public education, starting with the return of more than \$1 billion taken out of education by the government of Ontario."

This petition is signed by approximately 80 residents, mainly of the Windsor area. I support the petition and have affixed my name thereto.

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): I'm very pleased to present a petition signed by over 200 people from the Niagara Peninsula, a petition for equity in education funding. It reads as follows:

"Whereas this government has undertaken to reform the system of education funding to ensure fair funding for Ontario's children; and

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has stated that the province could, if it so chose, pass legislation extending funding to denominational schools other than Roman Catholic schools without infringing the rights guaranteed Roman Catholic separate schools; and

"Whereas providing our children with an excellent education consistent with our cultural and religious beliefs is a necessity and not a matter of preference; and

"Whereas independent schools successfully educate children across the entire spectrum of learning abilities and special needs; and

"Whereas all children of taxpaying Ontario parents deserve to have funding distributed in a manner that does not discriminate against those not using the public Catholic systems;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, respectfully request that the government take immediate steps to extend fair funding to all students of the province."

In support of this cause, I sign my signature as well.

Mr David Caplan (Orléans): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas providing daycare spaces is critical for the families in Toronto that need access to them; and

"Whereas the well-being of children should not be sacrificed to tax cuts; and

"Whereas the provincial government has significantly cut the budgets for Toronto school boards; and

"Whereas under the provincial government's ill-conceived Bill 160 there is no flexibility for boards to make up for the cuts; and

"Whereas daycare spaces in schools are now threatened by these cuts with the prospect of full cost recovery arrangements with daycares and the threat of school closures;

"Therefore, be it resolved that we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to repeal Bill 160 immediately; and

"Further be it resolved that the Legislative Assembly of Ontario instruct the Minister of Education and Train-

ing to restore meaningful and flexible funding to the Toronto school boards to ensure that they are able to continue to accommodate our community daycares; and

"Further be it resolved that the Honourable Dave Johnson, Minister of Education and Training, takes responsibility for his government's funding cuts rather than passing the buck to school boards, who have no control over provincial government spending cuts."

I agree wholeheartedly with this petition and I've affixed my signature to it.

PAY EQUITY

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I have a petition which is signed by 178 residents of Sudbury and area. It reads as follows:

"On September 5, 1997, the Harris government was ordered by the Ontario Court of Justice (General Division) to reinstate pay equity for women working in child care, nursing homes, community agencies and homemakers. Today all the Harris government has done is delay monies rightfully owed to us. All we have received is excuse after excuse. We the women who work in the public sector are petitioning the Harris government to pay out what is rightfully owed to us immediately. Not only did we have to fight for the decency to be equally and fairly paid, but now we have to continue to fight for the justice that was given us, despite this court ruling.

"We, the undersigned, want this injustice to stop now. No more excuses, no more stalling tactics. Let these women have what is rightfully owed to them now. Enough is enough."

This petition was organized by Val Trudeau, who is the CUPE president at Extencicare York in Sudbury. I agree with her wholeheartedly.

PROPERTY TAXATION

Mr Dave Boushy (Sarnia): I have a petition signed with 169 names from the city of Sarnia to the province of Ontario's Legislative Assembly.

"We, the undersigned residents of Sarnia, private homeowners within the boundary of the Cameron land claim, draw the attention of province of Ontario to the following:

"Those realtors selling homes within the Cameron land claim list a claim against the property in the sales agreement;

"That property values within the Cameron land claim are being reduced;

"That properties are harder to sell because of the claim, hindering the mobility of the residents.

"Therefore, your petitioners call upon the province of Ontario to suspend property tax increases for the residents within the Cameron land claim to comply with the market value method of assessment."

I am very pleased to add my signature to this petition.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas essential public services have been deprived of government funding because the Conservative government of Mike Harris has diverted these funds to self-serving political propaganda in the form of pamphlets delivered to homes, newspaper advertisements and radio and TV commercials;

"Whereas the Harris government advertising blitz is a blatant abuse of public office and a shameful waste of taxpayers' dollars;

"Whereas the Harris Conservatives ran on a platform of eliminating what it referred to as government waste and unnecessary expenditures while it squanders over \$100 million on clearly partisan advertising;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government and Mike Harris to immediately end their abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising."

I affix my signature because I'm in complete agreement with the sentiments of this petition.

1550

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Consideration of the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York): I move, seconded by Mr Preston, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

To the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has addressed to us.

Mr Speaker, before I begin, I would like to indicate that I will be sharing my time for remarks with the member for Brant-Haldimand.

On behalf of the people I represent in the riding of Durham-York, it is my privilege and it is my honour to move today the adoption of the third speech from the throne from the government led by Premier Mike Harris.

This throne speech celebrates the beginning of the third session of the 36th Parliament of the province of Ontario.

Imagine for a moment a bus, the province of Ontario bus, and the journey it has taken during the past few years. This is a bus that has an international reputation, one that everyone in Ontario takes pride in, one whose engine drives the rest of Canada as well. This is a bus with many, many passengers, each with a set of circumstances and a particular destination.

For many of these passengers, the early 1990s seemed like a bleak trip. The bus had become stuck in some deep ruts. There were those who were stuck in the trap of welfare, 1.3 million Ontarians; there were those who were unable to find jobs, as the province had lost 10,000; there were those who couldn't afford to hire because of job-killing payroll taxes; there were those who only saw the underground economy growing because of historically high income taxes. Exploding car insurance premiums were an issue for many. We were spinning our wheels in health care and education, where standards and spending did not mesh. All of this was costing us \$1 million an hour, every hour of every day, more than we took in.

However, in May 1994, the Common Sense Revolution was launched. Here was a plan to get out of the rut, those old ways that had our province of Ontario bogged down. Here was a plan to move our province forward, to allow everyone to get to his or her destination. Here was a plan to ensure that government changed gears.

When Mike Harris released the Common Sense Revolution in May 1994, he said:

"The people of Ontario are demanding to know why things never seem to change in government. They want government to make the same types of changes all of us have had to make in our families, our jobs, our businesses and our communities."

In June 1995, a year later, our party was elected on the basis of that plan, and the promise we would put that plan into place. Today our plan is beginning to work, thanks to the hard work and effort of all Ontarians.

Our plan called for lower taxes. It called for less red tape and reduced barriers to growth. It called for a less wasteful government, a government that focused its spending on priorities that we all value. Our plan was all about helping Ontarians reach that destination of prosperity and security. Without question, we are on the right track.

We began our journey by making sure that we had put more of Ontarians' hard-earned money back into their pockets. We have cut taxes 69 times. In fact, we've become trend-setters. Imagine, before we began the process of cutting taxes and giving people back their hard-earned money, cutting taxes was not in style. Tax cuts were unheard of. Liberal and NDP governments just kept on taxing and taxing and taxing, and spending and spending and spending. Those ruts were becoming deeper and deeper.

We have cut Ontario's personal income tax rate by 30%, making Ontario income taxes the lowest in Canada. We have eliminated the employer health tax on payrolls under \$400,000, and 88% of employers no longer pay this job-killing tax. We also eliminated this for the self-employed. We have frozen hydro rates for five years. We're cutting the small business corporate tax rate in half over the next seven years. We have eliminated the annual \$50 corporate filing fee and now new businesses are able to register electronically in a matter of minutes. We have reformed auto insurance, resulting in an average auto

insurance premium reduction of 10% for good drivers in Ontario.

Taken together, our plan has helped to put more money back into Ontarians' pockets.

There are signs that the plan is working. Thanks to all Ontarians, consumer confidence and investor confidence have resulted in the creation of thousands and thousands of jobs. Small business, the backbone of our economy, has created an amazing 80% of these new jobs.

As we move our province of Ontario on to firmer ground, our progress is exciting. We are able to promote ourselves elsewhere in the world. In the United States, for instance, we are able to tell them that we have the most dynamic economy in the Great Lakes region, adding new jobs twice as fast as our neighbours. We are also able to tell them that our combined income tax rate for manufacturers, 35.6%, is 4% lower than the US average.

Our plan was all about helping Ontarians to become better off and more secure, and without question we are headed down the right track.

But for a lot of families here in Ontario, it hasn't been easy to get ahead. Be it at a coffee shop in my riding of Durham-York or when I'm listening to the people in Georgina, hard-working Ontarians tell me how tough it is to make ends meet. Yes, there are more jobs out there than there were before, but many in Ontario are still looking for work. And yes, Ontario taxes are lower than they were, but even in families that have good jobs there isn't a lot of money left over at the end of the month.

Our government wants to make things a little easier for people, because even for those Ontarians who are starting to feel the benefits of the plan that we have put in place together, they are still not as well off as they should be.

Since we were elected, the average Ontario family's after-tax income has increased by more than \$3,000 — \$3,000 for an average family. That's enough money to put a sizable down payment on a brand-new, Ontario-made car. This \$3,000 increase is the direct result of our tax cut and the indirect result of the economic growth, and at least some of Ontario's economic growth has come because of some of the things we've done to improve Ontario's economic climate.

However, when adjusted for inflation, our average family's after-tax income is still about \$1,000 lower than it was a decade ago. That family would need that much more money, not to get ahead but just to get back to where they were in 1989. The recession of the 1990s was so deep that despite recent progress the average family has not fully caught up. That's not for lack of effort, as we try to make Ontario families better off and more secure; it just shows how difficult things had become before we came to office.

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Since then we've worked hard to put more of Ontarians' money back into their pockets, more money into the pockets of people like Kim and Chris DeWolde of Mount Albert in my riding of Durham-York, who recently had the opportunity to speak to Premier Mike Harris about

their eight-year-old window covering business. They talked to the Premier about the Mike Harris government tax cut and how these tax cuts have benefited them in their business and family life. They talked about the benefits of owning a home computer, a purchase they felt they could make, again because of government tax cuts. Taken together, our plan has helped to put more money back into Ontarians' pockets and we're starting to see signs that our plan is working.

Thanks to the hard work of Ontarians we have seen the creation of thousands and thousands of new jobs. They're good, high-paying real jobs, and as I stated earlier, small business has created an amazing 80% of these jobs.

There is real excitement out there from small business owners like Mike Johnson, owner of the Georgina Garden Centre located in Keswick in my riding of Durham-York. As Mike Johnson said:

"My business is excellent. It has been blooming for the last five years and we are forecasting tremendous growth for the next five. Very, very pleased. It used to be my wife and I running the business and now we're employing over 20 people and everybody who works here is ecstatic and so am I."

All in all, we have a lot to be proud of, but it hasn't been easy, and the credit for any of this success that we've had so far belongs to the citizens of Ontario. But we cannot be complacent, because in today's economy, as I believe all parties would agree, past achievements are no guarantee of continued success.

In a dynamic economy, new jobs are continually being created while other jobs are phased out or go elsewhere. A growing economy must create more net new jobs. The important thing to remember is that each and every job created is vital, and the decisions that are made to create or end those jobs are made not based on one or two or three, but on many factors that business people and investors must consider. We must maintain a competitive edge to ensure that job-creating decisions are made in our favour. We cannot stand still. We cannot get stalled. We must be vigilant in order to remain as the first choice for job-creating business and investment.

However, the job is not done. Just as you worry, so do we. If we return to our earlier-stated goal, that this is the best place to live, work and raise a family, we must also look down the road at the future for our children. We must also ask ourselves about the future for people in Ontario and for the people in my riding of Durham-York.

This government campaigned on a promise to remove barriers for business growth and make you more competitive. Job creation is the sign of a strong and growing economy. Job creation is a partnership between this government and the private sector that we take seriously. The more jobs created in ridings such as Durham-York, the more employed people we have in the region, who in turn spend more of their money again in the region. We all benefit.

This is why we continue to place such importance on making Ontario an attractive place to invest and why we

let Ontarians keep even more of their own money. Does this mean we don't understand that many people have greater concerns over health care and education? Not at all. Of course we understand. We hear and we listen, and I will address these issues later in my remarks. But the reason we pay attention to the things business pays attention to is quite simple. It is only the jobs and wealth created by them that enables government to have those services such as health care and education that we all value. That's something that people have to be reminded of every now and again.

Our policies and plan have helped restore Ontario as the leader of Canada's economy. Since 1995 Ontario gained 539,000 net new jobs. Ontario's businesses, both small and big, are taking full advantage of that new economic climate and are creating new jobs at a fast pace. Ontario's unemployment rate has fallen to 6.4%, the lowest since August 1990. I am pleased to add that in my own riding the unemployment rate for York region has declined from 8.8% in September 1995 to 6.4% in March 1999.

Young families are buying their first homes, a decision many put off for years of economic uncertainty. Business and consumer confidence are way up. Some, especially our critics, believe that this economic boom was coming anyway and we were just in the right place at the right time. I don't agree, and certainly neither do most objective observers. Imitation is the best form of flattery. Even the federal Liberals recognize the wisdom of cutting taxes. Jeff Rubin, the chief economist of CIBC Wood Gundy, says, "In today's economy, tax cuts make a lot of sense."

However, the test for a government is not what kind of external factors beyond your control you happen to be blessed or cursed with. The test is, do your policies and actions make the situation better or worse? Do your policies encourage people to spend, invest in their future, to create another job, or do they do the opposite? Experts agree that the tax cuts played a significant role in our economic turnaround.

This is all by way of saying that even if we hadn't done all the things we've done in the past three years, Ontario's economy would likely have seen some improvements. It is clear, however, that without the tax cuts and other incentives that improvement would have been a mere fraction of what actually occurred.

My riding of Durham-York is one of the fastest growing areas in all of Canada. It is the greatest place to live, work and raise a family. I represent hard-working families, people like Tim Garrard of Country Depot, a farmers' co-op feed and grain supplier in Sutton; or Larry Pegg, who operates a successful family-owned and -operated apple orchard in Sutton; or David and Anita Haynes, who spend countless hours in their hardware store in Sutton; or Janet Munro, owner of Country Style Donuts, a very successful businessperson who is also very active in the community; or David Granger, owner of the Guild of Automotive Restorers. The list goes on.

But despite all the good economic news, we will not rest until Ontario families are even better off and more secure, because the average Ontario family still takes home \$100 a month less than they did 10 years ago; because despite all the new jobs that have been created, too many people are still looking for a job or a better job than they have now.

Reviving Ontario's economy was just one plank of the common sense platform we presented to the Ontario people four and a half years ago. Making sure that those trapped on welfare benefited from that renewed strength was another. This is exactly what has been happening over the last three and a half years. Economic growth and welfare reform have done more for welfare recipients in this province than 10 years of rate increases, handouts and studies ever did. Today 374,000 people who were on welfare in June 1995 are welfare recipients no longer. We know that the majority of people leaving welfare are doing so because they have jobs. Two independent surveys done by Ekos Research have found that about 60% of people left welfare for job-related reasons. We also know that the majority of them left for a full-time job at much more than minimum wage.

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But there is still much more work to do. We have to help more people move from the despair of welfare into a hopeful future. For those who have yet to find jobs, workfare is giving them experience, self-esteem and hope. Four and a half years ago we were, and still are, the only party willing to commit to the principle that able-bodied welfare recipients should work in exchange for their benefits.

The opposition parties and many others scoffed at the idea of workfare. They said that people on welfare are already looking for work, which in itself is a full-time job. Well, yes, it can be, but you have to admit that it can be a pretty discouraging job, and it is the continual rejection, the dashed hopes, the feeling that one is contributing nothing to society that causes good people who were down on their luck temporarily to give up and stay on welfare indefinitely. Reversing that downward spiral is what workfare is all about.

Already more than 590,000 people have participated in one or more of the mandatory activities of Ontario Works. People on welfare have told us that workfare is making a difference in their lives. Workfare is helping them develop skills, make contact with potential employers and give something back to their communities.

Here's what one workfare participant in Hamilton said about his experience:

"I was depressed after I lost my job one year ago. [Ontario Works] gets me out of the house, gets me motivated and feeling confident. I've pretty much learned how to have self-esteem again. It looks really good on my resumé because, even though I'm not working, I'm still doing something... And I know what I'm doing is for myself and the community."

Welfare recipients with children present a special challenge because they usually need some kind of child

care support to participate in workfare. We are supporting them with increased funding of \$40 million in child care assistance for workfare recipients.

We also fulfilled another one of our Common Sense Revolution promises by implementing LEAP, the Learning, Earning and Parenting program, that provides child care subsidies and other supports to help single parents on welfare finish school. We are giving single parents the same opportunities as other workfare participants get, the same opportunities to acquire skills, find a job and keep a job. As long as they do not give up on themselves, we will not give up on them.

Giving up on education reform is something else we are not going to do. Our government is setting new standards in education province-wide. As most of you know, responsibility for education in Ontario is shared by the province, through the Ministry of Education and Training, and local school boards. The role of the province is to establish province-wide standards and to see that those standards are met by every single school board. It is the responsibility of the province to ensure that the best quality education possible is available to each and every child in Ontario. This government takes that responsibility very seriously.

As the member representing Durham-York and as a former teacher in York region, I too take this very seriously. For many years, provincial governments knew that about the only standard of excellence our education system could boast was its ability to raise property taxes. In fact, between 1985 and 1995 they achieved a property tax rate increase of 120%, while the number of students increased by just 16%. Dramatic results, but in the wrong direction.

Put simply, (a) our children's academic achievements, plus (b) our education budget, didn't equal (c) our expectations of competency. This wasn't the teachers' fault, it wasn't the parents' fault and it certainly wasn't our students' fault. It was the fault of successive governments that merely tinkered while all around them the reports calling for change gathered dust. After all, if the decisions were easy to make, past governments would have completed these needed reforms.

Finally, this government came along and said: "Let's see what's under this dust. Let's get the dollars back into the classroom and let's build the education system that our teachers, parents and students deserve."

What setting education standards is all about is making sure that all children have the opportunity to be the best they can be, no matter where they live or what their abilities or special needs may be.

It's about keeping a lid on class size so students and teachers can spend time together.

It's about refocusing the system to put the emphasis back on the fundamentals while still offering children opportunities to become well-rounded individuals.

It's about accountability for meeting standards: things like a province-wide curriculum that lays out goals and timelines for teachers and parents; a series of standard tests that measure progress towards those goals; and

understandable report cards that let teachers report back to parents how well their children are achieving these goals.

Here are some other things we are doing to set and implement standards that will let us get to that goal of an excellent education system: investing \$100 million in new textbooks and other materials, such as software and science equipment — there are literally millions of new textbooks in our children's classrooms; an end to larger class sizes through legislated average maximums; more classroom time for students — 10 extra days for secondary students and five for elementary; province-wide testing in grades 3, 6 and 11; a standardized, easy-to-understand report card; special ed funding protected at over \$1 billion a year; reducing the number of school board trustees and capping trustees' salaries; more parental input through a school council in every school.

But there is much more to do in our schools. Our new secondary curriculum will be implemented this fall. Premier Harris recently began a discussion on how we can restore civility to our schools and instill respect and responsibility in our students.

Just last week we released our education charter for Ontario schools, setting out the rights and responsibilities of students, teachers and parents. The charter reads as follows:

"Every Ontario student has the right to publicly funded elementary and secondary education that will open doors to future opportunities. Students have the responsibility to respect themselves and others within the education system.

"All teachers have the right to maintain order in their classrooms and the responsibility to commit to ongoing professional development and lifelong learning which will enable them to prepare Ontario's students to compete and succeed in the 21st century.

"Every parent has the right to know how their children and their schools are performing in comparison to others and the responsibility to be an active partner in the education system."

Ontario's teachers are first-rate, but in a rapidly changing world and with our new curriculum teachers need to keep learning and improving their skills.

Long-overdue changes are also happening at the post-secondary level.

We are creating a new student assistance program that will provide more than \$9 billion in student assistance over 10 years. The Ontario student opportunity trust fund will help over 185,000 post-secondary students over the next 10 years. Over 500 students a year will benefit from \$75 million in new graduate scholarships in science and technology.

We are doubling the number of students in computer science and engineering programs over the next three years, to 17,000, through the \$150-million access to opportunities program. This will help ensure that we have enough graduates to fill those high-tech jobs we want to attract to Ontario.

As promised in the Common Sense Revolution, we have deregulated tuition and professional programs, such as dentistry, medicine and law, which lead to high-paying jobs.

Schools that do increase tuition are required to use the money to increase the quality of their curriculum and facilities or to increase access through higher enrolment.

As we have with education, we have been working to bring health care into the 21st century.

We have a plan to bring health care into the 1990s. It is working, and now that we are through the difficult early stages of that plan, our goal of a dependable health care system is within our reach.

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There's no question, however, that working through this plan has been difficult. But then there's no way we could have expected it to be easy. After all, how could it be easy to turn around a complex, \$19-billion system, serving 11 million Ontarians, that hadn't seen major change since the 1950s? What impresses me is that the system works as well as it does. But even that just reassures me that when we are finished it will be even better.

There are many parts of the health care system where our plan is making a difference, but today I want to talk about just five that I know all members of this House care about: nursing, waiting lists, emergency rooms, long-term care and home care.

Time and time again, people tell us that caring, competent nurses have made a difference in their health and the lives of their families.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I think this is such an important presentation to Her Honour that it's important that we have a quorum to listen to it.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Would you check and see if there's a quorum present.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Durham-York.

Mrs Munro: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Nurses play a vital role in the delivery of health care. We agree. We also understand that the necessary reforms being made to the health care system have been a challenge for nurses.

As part of our commitment to a renewal of health care, we are making a \$1.2-billion investment in long-term care that will create 4,500 new positions for registered nurses and 2,900 new positions for registered practical nurses. Last year, as part of that, 1,000 new long-term nursing positions were created.

The \$300-million investment we have made in key programs will create new jobs for nurses in cardiac care, dialysis, hip and knee surgery, and cancer care. A \$5-million investment is creating jobs for nurses, including nurse practitioners, in community-based agencies.

Most importantly, in a reformed, revitalized health care system nurses can look forward to working in a better environment that focuses more dollars on patient care and provides, at its centre, a strong role for nurses, both in hospitals and in the community.

We have accepted and are implementing the recommendations of the Nursing Task Force, a task force we established. These recommendations include hiring thousands of new nurses and raising the level of Ontario's nursing care to the national standard.

Waiting for care has been a health issue for many years. Any health problem is stressful enough without the burden of a long wait for treatment. Waiting lists grew over the years because previous governments of all stripes did not make the difficult decisions necessary to move dollars into effective treatments.

Today, however, we are restructuring the health care system to make the best use of our health care dollars. More dollars are now going into the areas of highest demand, benefiting thousands of Ontarians. Some 30,000 cardiac cancer and dialysis patients are benefiting from over \$300 million that is expanding hospital-based programs. More than 16,000 new patients have benefited from \$65 million reinvested in cardiac care.

We recently announced an additional \$50 million in funding that will go to priority hospital programs such as cancer treatment, dialysis, cardiac care and hip and knee implants. As Dan Carriere, president of York County Hospital, stated in a speech to the health care forum, Thursday, March 4, 1999: "Our hospital has received \$6.2 million in growth funding over the last three years and this has rendered a difficult situation manageable." I wish to outline that this is the first time a government has recognized prospective growth and has funded accordingly in relation to the expectations of future growth needs of hospitals.

"In terms of services closer to home, York County Hospital has been honoured with the designation of the regional paediatrics/perinatal program, the regional eating disorder program and recently the cardiac care centre. This commitment by this government to offer services closer to home is real and has been clearly demonstrated through the GTA/905, York region and specifically at York County Hospital."

Our government has recently announced a new program of \$15.5 million to train, recruit and retain radiation specialists. We have more than enough machines in Ontario, but unfortunately we lack the trained personnel to operate them. Our plan will increase the number of individuals trained, beginning this year. In addition, by paying them more, we will ensure that once trained, they will stay and work here in Ontario. Finally, we are beginning an aggressive worldwide recruitment effort to find people who are willing to work here. Our focus is to bring the specialists to the patients instead of the other way around.

The third area I want to talk about is emergency rooms. The pressures that have built up in our health care system over the years often have their most visible

impact on emergency rooms. Restructuring hospitals and expanding long-term care will go a long way towards reducing that pressure, but we also set up the Emergency Services Working Group and responded immediately to its recommendations.

We are spending \$75 million over two years to help hospitals improve their services to better deal with emergency patients. A second instalment of \$40 million will be distributed to hospitals this April. Already, \$19 million is being spent to create 1,700 temporary, long-term-care beds to help reduce the pressure on hospitals' acute care beds. All hospitals that are benefiting from these additional new dollars have signed agreements to ensure the money goes directly into improving emergency services.

We have announced an additional \$90 million that will be spent over the next four years on emergency room services. This new money will mean the hiring of at least 150 full-time registered nurses starting this year. By working with hospitals, we developed a plan to provide relief valves in areas of high emergency traffic.

Thanks to \$22 million in relief funding provided in February, hospitals in Toronto, Hamilton, London and Ottawa will have the resources to open additional beds, hire staff for those beds and discharge patients into home care and long-term care seven days a week.

Emergency room pressures are just what they sound like — an emergency. In addition to the things we have done to help in the short term, restructuring will make for better emergency care. When the restructuring announced to date is complete, Ontario hospitals will have 18% more capacity to accommodate emergency and ambulatory patients than they had in 1995-96.

The fourth area I want to address is long-term care. Many of us struggle with decisions about how best to care for our aging parents or grandparents. At the same time, we wonder what choices will be available to us in our later years. Government is facing some difficult challenges too. The portion of our population made up of seniors is getting larger. They are living longer and their expectations of a better quality of life will be higher. I believe the health care goal and the plan of the Harris government will help us deliver the kind of care we and our relatives want and deserve as they pass through the stages of their lives.

Last year we began a major investment in long-term care. I would like to share some of the details of our plans with the House. We are about one year into a six-year, \$1.2-billion plan to expand and improve long-term-care services. This will mean 20,000 brand new long-term-care beds for our older citizens, an increase of 35%. Construction of the 6,700 beds that we have already signed contracts for has started this spring. The next group of contracts will also be awarded this spring.

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With every bed that is constructed comes an increase in nursing and other personnel to staff that bed and give personal care to our elderly. Right now in York region, in

my riding of Durham-York, this translates into 420 new long-term-care beds.

Our plan will also mean upgrading 13,000 existing beds to a higher standard and it will mean more and better services for those receiving care that enables them to stay in their own home — 48% more.

These last two aspects of the plan are crucial because they illustrate what this plan is all about. It's not just about dollars or beds; it's about providing the supports and services that older people need, whether in their own homes or another kind of home, to give them the best possible comfort, independence and quality of life. The 20,000 new and 13,000 renovated beds will be designed to meet new standards such as private or semi-private rooms, private bathrooms and shared dining facilities. That's one reason why it will take six years to get there.

But as good as those new facilities are going to be, most seniors will never see the inside of one except as a visitor. Most seniors will receive their long-term care in their own homes from health professionals, volunteers and family loved ones. Thanks to the investments to be made over the next few years, we will be able to care for seniors in the most sensitive way that provides them the most comfort and independence possible. Thanks to the belated recognition of federal responsibilities and restoring some of the federal health care funding, we have been able to speed up our plans for long-term care.

The final area I want to talk about is community-based home care. At the same time we are preparing for the future, we are making the lives of those who now receive community care even better. About 10 years ago the provincial government first promised one-window access to services in the home, such as nursing, therapy and housekeeping. While these services all existed, they were usually poorly linked. People or families needing care often had a difficult time getting answers and services. Now 43 community care access centres across the province provide one entry point to all available services. They not only provide information, they conduct assessments, determine eligibility, plan programs and arrange for services to be delivered. These services are available not only to the elderly but also to the disabled, the frail and people recovering from surgery. Long-term community care is available to all Ontarians.

Of the \$2 billion that is spent on long-term community care annually in Canada, \$1.2 billion is spent in Ontario. That's 60%, and we only have about one third of Canada's seniors. But long-term care and community care reform is not only about dollars, though people will always look to that as an indication of how well we are doing; it's about creating more and better choices for people who are, for the most part, not seriously ill but need a little help.

One of our priorities is to continue the expansion of home care services across all of Ontario. While we are trying to address existing pressures in the health care system, we are always mindful of what lies ahead. In the next 10 years Ontario will experience the greatest

increase in the population of seniors in our history. Our health care system must be ready.

We must also continue to commit the dollars necessary to support quality care. This year we are spending \$18.9 billion on health care, \$1.5 billion more than three years ago. Now that the federal government has restored some of the \$2.8 billion it cut in transfers to Ontario, we will be able to implement our plan even more quickly and make even more improvements to front-line services.

The changes we are making in health care may have seemed difficult and confusing at times but they are changes that are rooted in a long-term plan, a plan that has been put together by experts who know and understand what we need to do to make health care better, and now that we have come through the most challenging phase of that plan, we can all look forward to a phase of building and renewal and ultimately to a revitalized health care system with better services and benefits for all Ontarians.

Like health care, personal safety is another aspect of life in Ontario that people want to be able to count on. We believe that every Ontarian has the right to feel secure in his or her own home, neighbourhood and community. But we all know that the fear of crime has forced people to alter their lives. Today many people are afraid to go out at night, even in their own neighbourhoods. Many women will not use bank machines or public transit after dark, and are afraid to use underground parking garages or parking lots in secluded areas.

Ontarians should be able to feel safe in their own neighbourhoods. They should not have to fear that their homes and cars will be broken into or that their property will be vandalized if left unattended. And violence in Ontario, especially in our schools, should not be tolerated.

Some people would have you believe that because some crime statistics are declining we should all feel safe, but most of us know that a safe community and a feeling of personal safety aren't built on statistics. They are built on a certainty that the resources needed to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish all crime will be there when needed.

Safe communities are a cornerstone to our quality of life, a crucial component in our quality of life. We are working hard not just to make Ontario safer, but to ensure you feel safe in your communities.

We are putting 1,000 more community police officers on the streets and supporting programs that have put more than 340 OPP sergeants back in their cruisers. They are now making our highways safer by targeting aggressive and unsafe drivers. That means 77 new front-line police officers for York region in my riding of Durham-York. We are targeting break and enters and auto theft by creating regional teams dedicated to crack down on break and enter and auto theft rings.

We have passed a Community Safety Act which will allow police to release information to affected communities about high-risk offenders.

We are making it harder for criminals to get parole. The Ontario Board of Parole has been tightened up and now rejects more applications for parole than it approves. In 1995 almost two-thirds of those who applied were granted parole. Today two-thirds of applications are denied.

We have implemented tough measures against drinking and driving, including automatic 90-day suspensions, longer licence suspensions, mandatory education or rehabilitation for offenders, and a suspension for life after a fourth offence.

We have opened the province's first strict discipline facility for young offenders. Our proceeds-of-crime unit seizes and liquidates the assets of criminals and puts that money back into law enforcement. We've increased the funding to fight violence against women by almost 13% to \$100 million.

In Mount Albert in my riding of Durham-York the Honourable Dianne Cunningham, minister responsible for women's issues, participated in a round table discussion with women from all walks of life. We covered a variety of topics ranging from the pressures of juggling family responsibility to building on women's economic independence. These women all shared their success stories, and as the minister stated, this government promotes the success of women's participation in the economy.

As your government, we are working with educators, business and community organizations in four inter-related ways: by supporting educational opportunities for girls to make positive choices; by promoting the participation of women in math, science and technology based careers; by encouraging the recruitment, retention and promotion of women; and finally, by supporting women's entrepreneurial success.

We have also enacted a Victims' Bill of Rights and set up a victim/witness assistance program to support victims with services such as notification, crisis assistance and a victim support line.

Personal safety, health care, education, welfare reform, jobs: These are the priorities of Ontarians and the priorities of our government. These have been the focus of our efforts and of our reforms, which still enjoy the support of the many people who say we're on the right track.

Thanks to the hard work and support of Ontarians, we have made great strides in many areas, but there is so much more we need to do to make Ontarians even safer, better off, more secure and more confident in their own future and their children's future.

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There are a lot of people out there who said that our plan wouldn't work. These are the people who want to turn back the clock. They are the ones who see nothing wrong with high taxes and see nothing wrong with government deficits.

There are those who would like nothing more than to see Ontario go back to the tax-and-spend policies of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

There are those who believe that the only way to fix problems in our society is to throw money at them. We know better, and we know that things would be a lot better still if there were more civility, respect and personal responsibility in our society.

There are those who have complained and criticized about our plan and our ideas but offer no realistic ideas or solutions of their own.

There are those who don't understand that in order to afford the best health care and education that money can buy, you have to have a strong economy.

There are more jobs to be created for people who need them.

There is more money that needs to be put back into the pockets of hard-working Ontarians, the people who have earned the money.

There are more people whom we need to help to escape the trap of welfare and dependency.

There are more businesses that need even less government red tape in their way so they can flourish and grow.

There are more hopes and dreams that need to be realized.

None of us knows what kind of weather is on the horizon for Ontario's economy. Yes, our economy has made progress, but no one here in this room can predict the kind of economic weather that may come.

Many businesses in my riding of Durham-York, such as the Red Barn Theatre, a key tourist attraction and Canada's oldest summer stock theatre, the IDA in Newmarket, the Young Drivers of Canada in Newmarket, the Forhan Group, and Manny Simmon of the Buckingham Manor, agree and have let me know time and again that this government is on the right track.

Let me conclude by reminding all that the province of Ontario is back on track. The people of the province can have confidence that the engine has been finely tuned, that there is a committed hand at the wheel. We are going to reach our destinations of the security of well-paying jobs, of personal safety, of timely health care, of relevant education.

Of course, there are those who stand in the dust of the ruts, sure that tinkering and spending more money was the answer. We know that there are always steep hills and sharp curves ahead; we know that we must always be ready to listen and respond to those challenges; we know that people deserve to get to their personal destinations.

Today we are in the passing lane, determined to make this Ontario the best place to live, work and raise a family.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Further debate?

Mr Peter L. Preston (Brant-Haldimand): I'm honoured to second the adoption of the throne speech. The speech from the throne celebrated Ontario's role as Canada's economic powerhouse, yet also set a clear and bold direction and tone for the future.

The speech has been well received across Ontario, except of course by our friends across the way. I under-

stand the duties of the opposition parties, but it's a little strange and a little amusing that for four years we've been doing too much, too fast and now we're doing too little, too slowly. I'll tell the Leader of the Opposition that it's too early for the flip-flops. Wait. When the election comes he can do that as they have in the past.

My colleague the member for Durham-York spoke about the accomplishments of Ontarians over the last few years. I would like to use my time to expand on several of the newer government initiatives that the Lieutenant Governor touched on in the throne speech —

Interjections.

Mr Preston: — and I would like to share my time with the people across the way who would like to interrupt. They don't have much to say and never have.

Let's start at the beginning: the early years in a child's life.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. The member for Lake Nipigon, come to order. The member for Dovercourt, come to order.

Mr Preston: You also have a difficult adulthood, so that's not my problem.

We recognize that the learning a child receives in its earliest years is the foundation for that child's ultimate success as an individual in society. Premier Mike Harris announced less than two weeks ago a number of steps we would be taking to advance early childhood development, including setting up demonstration projects to test different ways to help young children learn. After receiving Dr Fraser Mustard's report on childhood development, Premier Harris also announced he would accept its recommendation to guarantee funding to all school boards for junior and senior kindergarten.

The report concludes that a child's brain development in the first six years of life sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour and health. As parents, we all want our children to have even more and better opportunities in their lives than we did. We will continue to do all we can to get our kids off to the strongest possible start in life.

In addition to starting demonstration projects, the government will appoint a task group to advise on the development, implementation and evaluation of early learning demonstration projects. The task group will complete its work on the first three tasks by December this year and the remaining two by March 2000. The Premier also announced that all existing preschool early learning programs will be combined and expanded with increased funding.

The Early Years Study confirms that many of this government's recent initiatives for children and families are on the right track. We have already accomplished a great deal. This report is an opportunity to build on what has already been done and rebuild on what was failed to be done in the five years prior to us getting here.

Since 1995, the Harris government has taken a number of steps to benefit children and their families. The Early Years Study specifically mentioned these initiatives.

More than 150,000 babies born each year get a better start under the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program. This program promotes quality early childhood development for all newborn babies and links families with the appropriate support and services in their community, including home visits. A public health nurse will telephone discharged mothers within 48 hours to follow up on a mother and child, how they're doing, and will offer an in-home visit. Seventy thousand young children with speech and language difficulties will get the help they need before they start school through our \$20-million preschool speech and language program.

Ontario now has a minister responsible for children, who monitors policies affecting children across the government and advises the Premier and cabinet on these issues. The office of integrated services for children promotes greater collaboration among ministries that provide services to our youngsters.

Up to 350,000 children in 210,000 low- and middle-income families are benefiting from our Ontario child care supplement for working families. The Ontario workplace child care tax incentive gives businesses an up to 30% tax deduction for the capital cost of building or expanding on-site child care facilities or for contributions to facilities in the community that care for children of working parents.

I would also like to mention some of the other new initiatives and continued programs for children and families that this government is supporting. Almost 70,000 children in 192 community partnerships have been supported through the Ontario breakfast for learning. Since September 1996, grants have been provided for 756 local child nutrition programs working in partnership with the Canadian Living Foundation.

New mothers will benefit from the recently announced \$27 million for hospitals that will allow mothers the option to remain in a hospital after childbirth.

1650

Some \$25 million has been put into Learning, Earning and Parenting. That helps teen parents on welfare finish high school, develop the skills they need to get jobs and learn important parenting skills.

Since 1995, the Harris government has increased access to regulated child care by 14,500 spaces and child care spending is up by close to \$170 million, an increase of almost 30%.

More than 4,000 children and their families in eight communities get help through the Better Beginnings, Better Futures program that provides parenting and support.

Work-for-welfare participants are benefiting from \$40.2 million for child care that is being provided to enable these parents to access job opportunities.

To improve the protection of children, the government is providing \$170 million over three years to increase children's aid society staffing, improve training and revitalize foster care. This is in addition to the \$15 million provided in 1997-98 to hire additional front-line staff and provide additional training. The government also

introduced Child and Family Services Act amendments that, if passed, would promote the best interests, protection and wellbeing of our children.

A \$10-million grant in 1998-99 to the Invest in Kids Foundation supports the foundation's efforts to promote effective early development skills, practices and policies.

Mr Wildman: Spend, spend, spend.

Mr Preston: If members of the opposition think spending money on children is excessive, I can't understand it.

Through the early learning grant, school boards choosing not to offer junior kindergarten receive funding to design early learning programs that best meet the needs of young children in their communities.

A few weeks ago our finance minister announced that Ontario will be the first jurisdiction in Canada to establish a registry of pedophiles, rapists and other sex offenders. The name of the proposed legislation is in the memory of young Christopher Stephenson, who at the age of 11 was abducted and brutally murdered in 1988 by a released pedophile on federal parole.

The coroner's inquest into Christopher's death recommended that the Solicitor General of Canada work with the Ontario Ministry of the Solicitor General, police and other appropriate bodies to establish a registry of sex offenders. The federal government has refused to proceed with such a registry. While a national sex offender registry would be most effective in preventing unnecessary harm against the vulnerable in society, the federal Liberals have chosen to ignore the recommendation. This despite well-publicized reports that show they have a history of losing track of paroled pedophiles, rapists and other sex offenders. Therefore, Ontario will act alone and introduce a province-wide registry to protect women, children and seniors.

The proposed sex offender registry would address the following.

Offenders convicted of sex offences committed in Ontario and Canada and residing in Ontario would be required to register with the police in their community and provide a current address. This information would be placed in the sex offender registry and would be accessible to local police services, that under the Community Safety Act have the ability to release the information to the public. The provincial government believes in disclosure of the names of sex offenders to protect the public and, by regulation, has given local police services the authority to do so. Offenders who fail to comply or provide false information without reasonable cause could receive a penalty of up to \$25,000 and/or a minimum jail term of one year for the first offence and two years less a day for subsequent offences.

Police officers in Ontario and across Canada have been calling for the creation of such a registry because it would give them instant access to current information on the whereabouts of known sex offenders. This will be an invaluable asset in many investigations.

We want to make sure the right steps are taken to prevent further tragedies, so I look forward to the introduction of this legislation in this session of the Legislature.

Recently, long-term-care minister Cam Jackson committed the province to spending \$1.06 billion this year on nursing, physiotherapy and homemaking services provided through community care access centres. In addition to the \$40 million announced last month, he is directing \$103.9 million to expand access to home care services, develop a CCAC information system and help long-term-care providers to prepare their computer systems for the year 2000.

The new money includes \$53.1 million to expand access to home care services. The \$1.06-billion total base budget for all 43 CCACs represents an increase of 55.6% over the \$681.1 million spent by the province for these services in 1994-95. As well, it is a 204% increase over the \$348 million spent in 1989-90.

These new dollars will help home care agencies continue to provide high-quality services to a growing number of seniors, disabled individuals, people living with HIV/AIDS and those recovering from surgery. The equity funding formula, used to determine funding for each CCAC, has been improved in its sensitivity to the requirements of home care clients living with AIDS.

Before the government introduced the equity funding formula, some parts of the province received just one quarter of the funding of other areas. The government made it a priority to distribute funds to areas that historically did not receive their fair share of provincial monies.

As well, the community care access centres, other community support service agencies and Ontario's 498 long-term-care centres will receive a total of \$20.8 million to help them make sure their organizations are Y2K-compliant. The funding is part of an effort by the government to help the broader health sector ready itself for the year 2000.

As most members will know, our government recently announced the biggest expansion of parks and protected areas in the history of Ontario. Ontario's Living Legacy strategy will add 378 new parks and protected areas totalling 2.4 million hectares, increasing the area covered by parks and protected areas in Ontario by one third. This plan includes nine signature sites, enhancement to outdoor activities and international marketing potential.

Since 1995, the Harris government has created a great number of parks and protected areas, more than all previous governments combined. As a result of the Living Legacy strategy, we will now be protecting an unprecedented expanse of land. The total protected area in Ontario will increase to 9.5 million hectares, equivalent to all of southern Ontario south of Algonquin Park.

The implementation of Living Legacy means that we will complete a representative parks and protected areas system across the Lands for Life planning area. We are protecting 12%, which is based on the standard set by the United Nations. It is the goal endorsed by the federal government and it is what Premier Harris promised to

deliver in 1995. Another promise made, another promise kept.

The Living Legacy strategy builds on the work of the Lands for Life consultation process. The government has accepted fully or in principle 213 of the 242 Lands for Life recommendations and continues to study a further 25. More than 65,000 Ontarians responded to Lands for Life and provided valuable input. That's what I call consultation.

Regarding teacher testing, any parent whose child has had a difficult year at school knows the difference a good teacher can make. That's why our government believes that a teacher testing program is an important and necessary final step in our plan to improve the quality of our children's education.

1700

We need and want a school system that helps every student reach his or her full potential. It's a tough world out there. Young people face pressures that, quite frankly, weren't there when most of us were growing up. Ontario's students need all the advantages they can get to gain the knowledge and skills they need to lead fulfilling lives and to land the best jobs.

In less than four years, this government has taken steps to help Ontario's education system better prepare our children for the challenges of tomorrow. We've introduced a new curriculum to raise standards. Teachers and parents have praised it as a clear, easy-to-understand blueprint for learning. A new student testing program is in place, helping students learn. Standardized report cards now give parents a clearer picture of how our children are doing, and most of us can understand them, which was not true in the past.

In sum, we've established higher standards, laid the foundations for a better education system. Now we need assurances that those new high standards are being reached, and that means measuring progress. Standardized, province-wide testing has begun to measure students' and schools' progress in meeting the higher standards. It only makes sense that we should measure the progress and skills of our teachers as well.

The quality of a child's teacher can make or break that child's entire education. As a society, we have a responsibility to ensure teachers have the up-to-date skills and knowledge they need to teach our kids well. Working with the College of Teachers, our government will require all Ontario teachers to participate in a testing program. Teachers will be accountable for knowing the material they are required to teach. As with any test, if you know your job, you don't have to worry about taking the test.

Opposition to this reform has been predictable and disappointing. Teachers' union leaders and our political opponents are opposed. They've said that testing teachers to ensure their skills are up-to-date undermines respect for what teachers do. These critics obviously aren't listening to parents, students and many concerned teachers.

For example, here's what one Ontarian wrote in a letter to the National Post that appeared on April 22:

"I read with interest that Dalton McGuinty's Liberal Party opposes ongoing recertification tests for Ontario teachers. He goes on to state, 'It's something we don't subject our lawyers to, our doctors to, our engineers to, our dentists to, our architects to.'"

They're subjected to testing every day. If they don't fulfill their job, they don't get another client.

"What he didn't point out is that the general public is welcome to use whichever lawyer, doctor, engineer, dentist, and architect they chose. When was the last time he was able to hand-pick which teacher would teach his child?" That's from a lady in Kitchener.

As for our friends in the NDP, I think it is fair to point out that in a press release dated February 13, 1995, then Minister of Education Dave Cooke announced several teacher education reforms. These reforms included "mandatory recertification of teachers every five years." That's another opposition flip-flop.

Knowledge is expanding at an exponential rate. The demands of teaching are dramatically different today than they were 10, 15 or 20 years ago. It matters a lot to our children and their futures to settle for anything less than the best, the most exacting and fulfilling education experience possible. That means we need the best teachers with the best skills standing at the front of the class.

Critics of teacher testing also have their facts wrong. The tests would not be overly difficult or unfair. They will, however, confirm that teachers are well versed in the material they are to teach our children. Any teacher who does not pass the test will have to learn the curricu-

lum, retake the test and pass. The reality is that no qualified, competent teacher will lose his or her job.

Teacher testing will help our teachers to learn more and teach more effectively. This will help our kids to learn more. Working together, we can help all our students make their dreams come true.

To conclude my remarks, I would like to caution all members that keeping our economy strong can only be assured by keeping our economic fundamentals sound. As the Conference Board of Canada and the OECD have said, we must continue cutting the tax burden to remain competitive and safeguard our quality of life for a new century.

That's why the throne speech called for balanced budget legislation, to ensure we never again sink into the red; a Taxpayer Protection Act, demanding citizen approval on future tax increases; a commitment to ensure access for Ontario construction workers to Quebec projects; and a continued commitment to cut taxes and remain competitive.

Only strong, principled leadership will lead Ontario into a new century. I believe the speech from the throne has demonstrated just such leadership.

I am pleased to have had this opportunity to express my support and to second the speech from the throne.

The Acting Speaker: Pursuant to the order of the House passed earlier this day, the debate is adjourned and the House is adjourned until 6:30 pm this evening.

The House adjourned at 1707.

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Government
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No. 2B

N° 2B

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

Third Session, 36th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 36^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Monday 26 April 1999

Lundi 26 avril 1999

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 26 April 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 26 avril 1999

The House met at 1830.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): I'll be sharing my 20-minute time with my colleague the member for Essex South this evening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Mrs McLeod: This speech from the throne began in a most unusual way. It began not with a government trumpeting its successes but in full retreat from one of its major disasters. The first initiative that was set out by the government in its speech from the throne is a promise not to act. This government will not, it announced, be proceeding with its ill-advised disabilities act.

You remember that the Premier said, before he was the Premier, that he would introduce a disabilities act in his first term in government. Like so many of his promises during the last election campaign, this one is obviously going to be interpreted a little bit differently, now that the Premier has to face an accountability session on what they actually delivered during their first term in government. I suspect we will hear the Premier say: "I did, after all, introduce a disabilities act. I never actually said I would pass it." The fact that the disabilities act that was introduced was such a complete and total sham that none of the advocates for a disabilities act wanted to see it passed will probably be beside the point.

The government said in that opening section of the speech from the throne that they had heard concerns about their pioneering legislation, and because they'd heard the concerns, they would not reintroduce this so-called "pioneering" legislation. The only thing pioneering about the disabilities act was that the government found new ways to betray a promise that was made. They couldn't possibly have avoided hearing the concerns from an outraged community of advocates.

Dalton McGuinty is committed to introducing and passing meaningful legislation, a meaningful, real Ontario disabilities act.

That's the beginning of the throne speech. Then we move to the end of the throne speech, or almost the end of the throne speech, and what do we find? We find the government's position or plan or non-plan for health care. Maybe that's an appropriate place for health care to be in this particular speech from the throne, because the Harris government didn't even attempt to deal with the mess they created in health care until the end of their mandate was in sight.

The strategy of this government from the very beginning was quite clear. They wanted to create the pain of their cost-cutting early and then offer the Band-Aids that would make everybody feel as though the pain was over and all would be well. In fact, it seems to me that was one of the earliest of the now \$100 million worth of taxpayer ads that we saw; that was one of the messages of those early ads. The government discovered that the Band-Aids weren't enough to appease people and make them feel the pain was over. Because the harm they had already caused was simply too great, they couldn't staunch the bleeding with a Band-Aid.

This government's record in health care has been absolutely littered with broken promises, like the promise the Premier made that it was not his intention to close hospitals, as he then set out to close one in five hospitals across the province; or his promise that there would be absolutely no new user fees in health care, and then he forced seniors to pay for the costs of prescription drugs.

People of this province know what this government has done to health care. They know about people lying on stretchers in emergency room hallways. They know about the lack of beds and the long waiting lists for surgery. They certainly know that this government that two weeks ago wanted to advertise the fact that it was spending money to hire 10,000 nurses was exactly the same government that spent the same \$400 million to fire 10,000 nurses. They know about the fact that this government is shutting down 40% of chronic care beds. They know that there has been absolutely nothing on the critical issues of mental health. This government decided to bury its health care non-agenda almost at the end of its speech from the throne with a sort of apology for the mess they had created, a kind of: "Don't blame us. This really is a problem, you know." It certainly is a problem now because the Mike Harris government has made it so much worse.

The Minister of Education today suggested, in an answer to one of the questions that was raised, that health care and education were his government's priorities.

Perhaps the Minister of Education had just finished reading the Liberal platform, *The 20/20 Plan: A Clear Vision for Ontario's Future*, where health and education are clearly set out as priorities. They're equally clearly not priorities for the Harris government. The Premier made that clear later on in question period today when he said, "No, really taxes are our priority, taxes and the cost-cutting that has gone with them."

This Ontario public really does care about health and about education, so the government decided that if it couldn't get away with selling its health care plan, couldn't get any credit in spite of all the advertising dollars they'd put into it, maybe they could get some points with the public by going back to education bashing once again. So I go back then to the middle of the throne speech where we find yet another attack on education from the Harris government, a renewed attack on teachers and a whole new attack on students.

Mike Harris's so-called charter of rights and responsibilities leaves out something which I think is extremely significant when it comes to the provision of educational opportunity across the province, and that is the responsibilities of government.

I ask this question because I look at what this government has done to education over the course of the past four years. I look at the fact that it deliberately set up public education for failure, that it set out to convince the Ontario public that Ontario students were at the bottom of the pack on international tests, that the system was broken. They used some of their advertising dollars, taxpayer dollars, to send out a brochure that shows that our students were 11th out of 11 on international tests, but they cut the graph off at number 11, when in fact 33 countries participated.

It's like the Minister of Education saying we need a new secondary school curriculum because our students have been cheated of a good education, without noticing that the most recent international tests showed that our students, Ontario students, were second only to France on tests of advanced mathematics.

This is the same government that has deliberately set out to make enemies of teachers. They have demoralized teachers. They have driven them out of the profession by the thousands.

This is the government that has stripped away the kinds of supports that give children a chance to succeed and taken away any chance at all for adults to get a high school diploma.

This is a government that now, with its so-called charter of rights and responsibilities, wants to set students up for failure, taking us back to the 1940s, when in fact about 50% of the people who are now in our secondary schools would never have made it to high school. We've come a long way past that in the province of Ontario. I hope this Mike Harris government never gets the chance to take us as far back as they want to take us.

This is the government that in its charter now pretends, after having driven thousands of teachers out of the profession, to be concerned about quality teaching.

This is exactly the same government that in Bill 160 was ready to have unqualified teachers head up classes and retreated from that ill-advised position only because of the outcry, not only of professional teachers, but of parents who believed that having a qualified teacher in front of the classroom was indeed absolutely important.

This government does not have a lot to say about teacher training. They want to say a lot about teacher testing. They don't want to have a lot to say about making sure we have highly qualified professional teachers at the front of the class to begin with. They certainly don't want to have a lot to say about teacher training, certainly not when they offer training programs to teachers that begin by showing a segment of *Father of the Bride* and suggesting that all the teachers really need to do is be less resistant to change. But I feel that, in any event, you can't test the interaction between a good teacher and a student.

What is not in the throne speech is what really concerns me. That is the ideological direction of this government, which we have seen manifest itself over and over again. Without any question, the ideological direction of this government is to take us increasingly into a privatized system and increasingly into two-tiered health care and two-tiered education.

We've seen it repeatedly in our post-secondary system, with the deregulation of tuition fees, with soaring tuition fees making many programs and many schools inaccessible for all but wealthy students. We've seen the incursions of privatization into our health care system. Of the long-term bed contracts that have been awarded under this government, 70% have gone to for-profit health care companies, often at the expense of non-profit providers.

We've seen the move towards two-tiered education begin to take shape in elementary and secondary education, where this government has removed any legislative barriers to the setting up of charter schools.

We have only a few minutes tonight. I just want to conclude by saying that I think this government very deliberately decided not to set out its direction for the future in its throne speech because the direction that they really want to take Ontario, the direction they intend to take Ontario should they get a second mandate, is not where the Ontario public wants to go. They want to take this government into an increasing Americanization of our health care and education systems. They want to put at risk our greatest values: equal opportunity to health care and education, regardless of how wealthy you are.

Let's hope, for the sake of our future, that we never get to see the full measure of the Harris agenda.

1840

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak to the throne speech. Like my colleague, it's not so much what's in the throne speech that I'd like to emphasize this evening, but it's what is not in the throne speech. Last year in the throne speech there were 16 words out of thousands that mentioned agriculture. This year I think it's an absolute shame that there isn't one word that mentions agriculture

and farming, no word about the second-greatest industry in the province of Ontario.

Let's just review why perhaps it is that the government was afraid to mention anything about agriculture in the throne speech this year. An election promise in 1995 from the then leader of the third party, and subsequently the Premier, was, "We will not cut one cent from agriculture." I want to tell you what they did.

In 1995 they cut \$2.5 million from the Niagara tender fruit lands program by its cancellation. Cuts to Foodland Ontario marketing program: \$1 million. Cuts to the cancellation of dairy audit programs: \$600,000. Cuts to the agricultural investment strategy program, something that would help agriculture in the future: They cut \$1.5 million. In November 1995 this government made cuts to the GRIP and NISA programs of \$11.3 million.

In 1996 three of the significant reductions in spending on agriculture were the restructuring of agricultural programs — which included, by the way, further field office closures — further cuts to GRIP and NISA, and cuts to the international marketing program that amounted to \$8.3 million. They eliminated ministry services, which include requiring commodity groups to pay for the administration of grading, enforcement and regulation. They made cuts to laboratory services, research programs and education programs that amounted to \$31.3 million. In that same year they made cuts to the Foodland program's promotions and cuts to the municipal outlet drainage program that amounted to \$6.4 million.

This from a government that said they weren't going to cut one cent from agriculture. Parliamentary procedure prevents me from saying what I really think, but the facts are obvious here. Again, this year they mentioned nothing about agriculture. So one might speculate what might happen to the second-largest industry in Ontario. I think it's a shame.

I point out to you that in The 20/20 Plan: A Clear Vision for Ontario's Future we are committed to \$140 million of expenditure on agriculture, and that's in addition to the Ontario whole farm relief program, because we know, we understand and we feel that agriculture needs our support. It's a significant economic driving force in Ontario.

Tomorrow we are going to meet — "we" being Pat Hoy, our agriculture critic, and me and others — with the farmers of Ontario. They have a plan, they have a suggestion for this government, or for any government for that matter, and we want to listen to them, that outlines the opportunities for investment in a healthy future. They're going to cover areas of risk management; this government has almost decimated the funds that were available for that. They're going to cover areas like market development; this government obviously thinks it's not important, by the co-operative funding they've taken out of that.

We're going to talk about the environment. There aren't any greater environmentalists in this province than the farmers of Ontario. They're willing to work with the government to improve the environment of our province

— a government, by the way, that has all but gutted the environment in environmental regulation and environmental enforcement in Ontario.

When it comes to the environment, it's almost impossible to get an answer out of this government. I know that over the months we've been off I've attempted on various occasions to communicate with the Ministry of the Environment, and they're so paranoid about it, so absolutely paranoid about it that you can't get the time of day out of environmental offices across the province. They refer you to the minister's office because I think they quietly know what their officers in the field feel when it comes to the environment.

Nothing was mentioned in this speech from the throne that would speak to something else that not only farmers but all Ontarians are interested in, and that's gasoline prices. We have the gasbusters who go out with their Polaroid cameras before weekends and take pictures, but you know, a picture tells a thousand words and the thousand words about those pictures are that you've done absolutely nothing to control gasoline prices to keep the business people, to keep the farmers, to keep the average citizens in this province from being gouged by gasoline prices. Oh, the minister and I think the Premier said, "We're going to bring the gasoline companies to heel." Well, they didn't do a darn thing about it, and you're going to hear a little bit more about that from me later this week because I have been concerned about the gouging of the citizens and the businesses of Ontario through the gasoline prices we've had to suffer, particularly before long weekends.

There's another area that I thought I had some agreement on and that was the area of consumer protection — nothing mentioned about that in the throne speech when it comes to negative option billing. I even thought I had the minister's agreement at one point a year or so back when we reached the end of one of the sessions, but nothing came of it.

They're big on words, "Oh yes, we want to help you, we want to protect you." The only thing is, they don't do anything about it, and that's I think what people want from a government. They listen to a government that says, "We've done wonders in health care." Well, this is the government that's turned emergency rooms into waiting rooms. We have enough waiting rooms in hospitals. What we need are beds in hospitals. We need to be able to admit those who are in emergency rooms to beds so they'll be cared for. We hear of people dying in emergency rooms. That shouldn't happen in the province of Ontario; it shouldn't happen anywhere in the Dominion of Canada. We live in one of the greatest nations in the world and it's a shame we have to put up with those kinds of things.

My colleague mentioned education earlier. They're saying a lot about education on television these days. In fact they're saying so much about it that I'm inclined to think the provincial government is one of the biggest advertisers on TV.

Mr Harry Danford (Hastings-Peterborough): Not as big as you are.

Mr Crozier: He says not as big as I am. I would like to give whoever mentioned that the opportunity to say what he meant. I'm really not very big. In fact there are some people I would compare myself to over there and I think I'd compare quite well. The point is this: As to the money that's been needlessly spent in advertising by a government that says it can manage things, by a government that has increased the overall debt of this province by some \$20 billion, by a government that represents a party that has created the greatest portion of the debt of anybody in this province, I don't think I'd be very proud and I don't think I'd be simply making offhanded remarks, because your record quite frankly is absolutely nothing to be proud of.

There's a lot that was said in the throne speech that meant absolutely nothing, and to emphasize what I started off with in the first place, I think it's an absolute shame that you didn't have guts enough to even mention farming, agriculture, anything like that at all. Shame on you for not supporting the farmers of Ontario.

1850

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the members from Fort William and Essex South. I agree with a number of comments they made in critique of the throne speech and some of the elements of the throne speech — both of them took time to talk about the 20/20 Plan which, as you would know, is the Liberal Party's campaign document. I have to tell you, when I heard that title, 20/20, I thought about eyesight. It's like, "I can see clearly now." There's been a seeing of the light, a seeing of the way; there's been a transformation on the road to Damascus.

I remember in 1995, the party that now can see clearly campaigned on tax cuts; campaigned on laying off public service workers; campaigned on "mandatory opportunities" — some fancy words for "workfare"; opposed employment equity; opposed pay equity. They campaigned for the continued and growing use of private sector delivery in health care, right? What are we hearing now? It's the complete opposite. It's because the current government implemented all the things that the Liberals ran on back in 1995, plus more. I disagree with them and I disagree with what they campaigned on.

They can see clearly now. They've made commitments of over \$2 billion in this next campaign. Have they told you how they're going to pay for it? Let me tell you, the money is going to come magically from someplace. There's no commitment to paying for those things in a realistic way that won't add to the debt, that is a fiscally responsible approach.

Interjection.

Ms Lankin: It's just a lot of money coming from the air, as my colleague over there says, that they're going to spend willy-nilly.

If you believe that there's a bridge, there's some swampland in Florida, we can talk deal time here. The

bottom line is that a commitment that you don't know how it's going to be paid for is an empty commitment, and the 20/20 document is full of empty commitments.

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): I appreciate the opportunity to make some comments specifically about the comments made by the member for Essex South, who bemoaned the fact there was no reference in the throne speech to agriculture and went into a litany of things that he saw as being negatives. It's interesting to me that he did not mention the 8% rebate of the provincial sales tax, which is assisting farmers to build new infrastructure. He didn't mention the fact that the farm tax rebate is now paid directly out of the property tax.

He represents a part of the province that includes Leamington. The farmers in Leamington who are in the agrifood business, specifically the greenhouse growers, are absolutely enjoying the greatest expansion ever in their industry. I would have to think that results are more important than words, and I'm sure the member will make some reference to how proud he is of the wonderful job that's being done by the farmers in the agrifood business in the Leamington area. They are obviously enjoying what this government is doing; they're enjoying the prosperity that comes from reduced taxes and increased business. I'm really surprised that the member for Essex South didn't make reference to that.

The other thing he talked about was what this government has done in the area of health care. He may not have had an opportunity to read the papers today or to hear the radio, but if he did, he will know that just this very day the Minister of Health made an announcement of \$7.2 million of reinvestment in the hospital in his community. He talks about the fact that we haven't done good things for health care, when in his own community of Leamington this very day our Minister of Health made an announcement: a reinvestment of \$7.2 million in the hospital in Leamington. The member for Essex South should stay up to date with what's happening rather than dwell on the throne speech.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell): Je dois féliciter mon collègue d'Essex-Sud pour les commentaires qu'il vient d'apporter concernant le budget qui a été présenté jeudi dernier.

Je crois que c'est une vraie honte pour un gouvernement qui se dit avoir un respect dans tous les domaines de la province, lorsqu'on prend la peine d'oublier complètement le secteur de l'agriculture lors de la présentation des discours de la sorte. Je crois que le gouvernement conservateur ne devrait pas dire qui est au pouvoir. J'aurais honte. Actuellement, nous savons que l'agriculture en Ontario est le secteur le plus important. On dit que c'est la colonne vertébrale de l'économie en Ontario. Même si on dit que l'industrie de l'automobile l'est, je crois que le secteur de l'agriculture est déjà très important.

Récemment, dans les cinq comtés de l'est, nous avons présenté un rapport qui a été reproduit par une firme de consultants. La firme de consultants a démontré que dans les comtés de Glengarry, Prescott, Russell, Stormont et

Dundas, nous avons des retombées économiques d'au-delà de 375 \$ millions, et puis ce gouvernement d'aujourd'hui a pris la peine de venir avec un discours du trône jeudi dernier et a complètement oublié de parler à un secteur qui est très important. On entend souvent le gouvernement dire qu'on doit protéger l'agro-alimentaire, mais qu'avons nous fait ? Nous l'avons oublié.

Récemment, il y a plus d'un an, nous avons passé la crise du verglas. La crise du verglas pour le secteur de l'agriculture — oui, on doit mettre notre chapeau sur la tête, de la sorte que mon ami dans le bout de Sarnia met le journal sur la tête. Je pense qu'il a eu honte lui aussi de son gouvernement, de voir qu'ils ne l'ont pas touché, parce que c'est une personne qui a de l'expérience dans le domaine de l'agriculture. Donc, ça démontre encore que même si —

The Acting Speaker: Further questions or comments? If not, the member for Fort William.

Mrs McLeod: I'm a little amused but not surprised that the New Democrats are attempting to run this next election campaign as fiscal conservatives. I guess the reason I'm not surprised is that having had the experience of what happens when you run up a \$10-billion deficit, I think I understand why they were being cautious enough to put their entire platform on to a bookmark.

I find it very interesting that both the New Democrats and the Conservatives were so convinced that we were only going to be able to fund our commitment out of a surplus if Mike Harris was successful in balancing the budget that they both tried to say that we are not going to be able to fund our commitments because, after all, Mike isn't going to balance the budget.

We knew that Mike wasn't going to balance the budget. Why would we count on Mike Harris balancing the budget when he said he had no intention of balancing the budget? That's what's incredible about the speech from the throne. He reaffirms the commitment he made, the promise he's going to keep, that he would not balance the Ontario budget with four years in office, with good economic times. He is committed to not balancing the budget after he's run up \$22 billion on top of the debt that the NDP had already increased.

We are going to fund our commitments with a \$2.5-billion immediate investment fully funded from current dollars in the budget. We will balance the budget even though Mike Harris will not. We will then use 55% of the surplus that comes when we balance the budget to make further investments in health and education and our priorities.

Mr Crozier: Thank you, Speaker. I —

The Acting Speaker: No, you can't do that.

Mr Crozier: Can't I use up the 10 minutes?

The Acting Speaker: No, you can't do that. Sorry about that, but you can't.

Further debate?

Ms Lankin: It's too bad. The member for Essex South wanted to show the members of the Legislature his tomato cufflinks and his Heinz 57 watch. I think he was

trying to take that opportunity. We'll just give him that plug, that he's a true Leamington person supporting the local farming community.

I'm pleased to have this opportunity to speak on the speech from the throne. I am truly glad to have sparked that response from the member for Fort William and to hear her once again attempt to rationalize how they're going to pay for over \$2-billion-plus in promises that they've made for this campaign, particularly acknowledging that we don't have a balanced budget here in Ontario.

Quite frankly, Mr Harris is out there announcing spending of money like crazy these days, like drunken sailors. If you want to talk about conversion on the road to Damascus, just take a look across the floor. It's quite amazing in and of itself.

It will be interesting to know whether the members of the Liberal Party will cancel those funding announcements. Will they take out the money being earmarked for emergency rooms or will they take out the money being earmarked for cancer care? Who knows? I'm not sure I even believe the commitments that are being made by the government, but where does the money come from that the Liberal Party is talking about?

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I think the bottom line is if you want to make commitments, the public of Ontario deserves to know where the cash is going to come from. I hope that in the debates that follow and that come during the period leading up to and during the election that hard question is asked, because I think you'll see a lot of Liberal skates being sharpened in order to try and get around that. It's been my experience, as I've been debating with Liberals over the past couple of months, that it's a very difficult answer for them to come up with.

I wanted to address some of the specifics in the throne speech. In particular, I guess it was the tone, and it's a tone that has been repeated by members opposite this afternoon in their beginning rotational debate on the throne speech. It's one in which they talk about leadership. I find that interesting. This is not a campaign, from their perspective, to be run on their record — I guess we can understand why; not one to be run on assurances about the future — I guess we can understand why. It boils down to their attempting to run on a record of leadership, on having made tough decisions, on having a Premier who is tough. There's a lot of this leather jacket, sports analogy kind of tough stuff that we'll see.

I think it's particularly interesting because, of course, they have determined that is their strongest card to play, in counterpoint to the official opposition. You can see in the government's political party ads that are out there, in which they attack the leader of the official opposition, it is a question of leadership that they seem to be wanting to go to the public on.

I guess I want to question what leadership means. I want to question how it shows leadership in the province of Ontario to have committed in the Common Sense Revolution, and over the years since then, the last four

years, to over one and a half million persons with disabilities in this province and to many people who support their legitimate call for an Ontarians with Disabilities Act, to bringing down barriers, whether access to employment, to recreation, to leisure, to living life on a fair and equal basis with access to all that our communities and society have to offer. How is it leadership to have made a very specific commitment to that group of people that a full Ontarians with Disabilities Act would be implemented, one, which is very clear in the debate and the discussion that led up to the Premier of this province making that commitment, that would be based on the principles and experience in the United States, the Americans with Disabilities Act? In fact, the Premier has even referred to that in years gone by. However, the story changed.

As you know, last fall the government introduced a bill it chose to call an Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and the response was loud and quick and very much to the point. I remember one of the leading spokespersons from the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, David Lepofsky, saying very clearly, "We have been kicked in the stomach by this government."

There was nothing of any strength or any effectiveness in that bill. There was no enforcement mechanism. It didn't call on a single party in the private sector to do anything, it didn't call on any other level of government to do anything, and all it said about the Ontario government is that each ministry would have to review the legislation under its purview. They didn't have to do anything about what they found when they reviewed it; they just had to review it.

I want to remind the government that a process of systemic barrier review, ministry by ministry, had already been undertaken in the province of Ontario. Those reports were there and actions were mapped out, so with respect to the Ontario public service, there already was a game plan in place. But I will also remind the government that when they took power in 1995, they cancelled all of the implementation committees, they cancelled the barriers fund that was there to help refit workplaces, to bring barriers down, and they cancelled the positions in the ministries that were dedicated to implementing that. Please, tell us how any of us could even believe that the meagre little bit that was in that bill that you so incorrectly named an Ontarians with Disabilities Act meant anything given your track record at that point in time. But beyond that, it didn't come close to approximating what people in the disability community had been calling for with respect to an act that would force the identification and removal of barriers, one that would even in the first instance say that if a new building was being built it should be built absolutely barrier-free. That hasn't even been done. It wasn't in the legislation, and there was no enforcement mechanism.

People in the disability community rightly felt betrayed. They came back and sought commitments from the government that an appropriate bill would be brought forward. In fact, they had a resolution sponsored through

the House by the member from Windsor — help me, someone in the Liberal Party — Dwight Duncan.

Mrs McLeod: Windsor-Walkerville.

Ms Lankin: Windsor-Walkerville. Thank you.

Dwight Duncan and myself worked with the ODA committee in bringing that resolution forward. It followed on the heels of the member for London Centre, my colleague Marion Boyd, who had had a similar resolution earlier in this House, and called on all parties to support the implementation of an Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and in this case based on 11 specific principles, all there, spelled out. Every member who was present in this House stood and voted in favour of that resolution.

The members of the disability community thought that was a victory. They thought maybe it meant the government understood and would bring forward an appropriate bill at that point in time. And what did we hear in the throne speech? A simple sentence saying: "We heard you. We understand you didn't like our bill so we're going to come back and consult with you again."

How cynical, at a time when all the province is in on alert for an election, believing that the Premier will be calling an election within the next few short weeks. How cynical to say we're going to go back and consult again, when this House already passed a resolution outlining the 11 principles that should be contained within the act, when we have the body of experience from the US in terms of the Americans with Disabilities Act. What a betrayal, yet again, of people.

The minister came down to meet with members from the disability communities that were gathered here that day, awaiting the throne speech and hoping they were going to hear that an appropriate act would be reintroduced. You know what was so telling? It was so telling that this was in fact a last-minute, throw in a line just to try and buy them off. She came into that room and said very clearly that she had no information to give them about what form the consultation would take, when it would start or how long it would last.

They hadn't had those discussions. Since December, when this House adjourned, through all the months of the intersession, she didn't contact those people. She didn't talk to them. She didn't say: "OK, we're going to get together and talk about what the consultation is. We're going to talk about how the consultation will take place and in what form it will be and what our goal is for reintroducing a piece of legislation."

What did she do? She stood there and said to those people: "I don't know what form the consultation will take. I don't know when it will begin. I don't know when it will be over."

I actually feel some sympathy for the minister, because I don't think she's in control of that agenda. I think it is the government that is not allowing that to go forward. This is a way of trying to manage people, manage their expectations, but I can tell you, it didn't work.

I can tell you, they're angrier now than they ever have been. To be insulted and told, "Well, I'm sorry, there are other people out there who have opinions, but I'm not

going to tell you who they are, I'm not going to tell you who else we're listening to, and I'm not going to tell you who objects to your proposal for legislation. I'm simply going to come out and consult again." No wonder that community is so bitterly disappointed. That's not leadership on the part of the Premier.

Let's talk about what's been happening in the Ministry of Health. Despite all of the numbers the government throws out, they, in their first two years, cut funding to hospitals. They know it's over \$800 million they cut from the base funding for hospitals. This was before any restructuring was done, before any realignment of services was done. It has thrown the hospital system into crisis and you're now trying to patch up the crisis. You're throwing Band-Aid after Band-Aid on the system.

They promised money two years ago for emergency services. That never came through until there was a crisis in emergencies, and then the cheques started to flow. Then they didn't all come. Now there are further crises, and now we have the minister today saying, "That's why we're committing more money to emergency services and to rebuilding emergency departments." They cut the money in the first place. How are we supposed to believe that's leadership? They spent \$475 million on severance pay for nurses whom they're now scrambling to hire back. How is that leadership?

They came to power and cancelled the proposals and the plans for two regional cancer treatment centres, which they subsequently, two years later, reannounced and still haven't built. How is that leadership? There was a specific course that had been set up to train additional radiation therapists in the province to deliver cancer services. We have a shortage of radiation therapists now. They cancelled those additional resources. They changed the base of the program from a college program to a university program and didn't have any transition in the meantime, so we have a whole year or two without people being graduated. Now they're trying to bring people into the system, scrambling again. How is that leadership?

I ask you, on issue after issue, how is that leadership? How is it leadership to throw the whole education system into turmoil? Remember, the minister promised this. He promised a crisis and we do have a crisis.

1910

I don't disagree with bringing in new curriculum. I disagree with a government that brings in new curriculum without giving the appropriate resources to teachers. Let's look at the situation in secondary schools right now. That new curriculum is supposed to be implemented in September. They don't even have the full course outlines yet. The publishers have not developed the textbooks to go along with that because they don't have the course outlines to do it on. So the teachers haven't been able to review text books, to select them, and there's therefore no provision for teacher training for this summer. How will they be prepared to implement that? Well, they won't. It will be much like what happened last year in elementary schools.

I have been visiting all the schools in my riding over the last two months. In school after school in the elementary schools those teachers are saying very specifically that in some cases they've only just now got their textbooks for the new curriculum. In many cases they don't have sufficient teacher resource manuals for the new textbooks. There are three grade 3 teachers I met who have to share one resource book and they have to negotiate who's going to take it home on any given night to do the class preparation. There's also so little money in the supplies budget for all the new supplies that are required for the new curriculum, for the science tests and all the other things that are laid out in there, teachers are going out and buying them out of their own pockets. There isn't money in the school budgets for that. How is that leadership?

How is it leadership to denigrate a whole profession like the teaching profession in the way in which this government has? It's shameful to have singled out a respected group of people in our community who work hard educating our most valuable resource, our children, and to continually attack and attack until there's such a state of demoralization that it's very difficult for them to continue making the system work, as they are doing every day in our schools right now.

What's the latest? An announcement right out of the blue from the government about teacher testing. Isn't that interesting? Not one word of consultation with the newly established College of Teachers, the self-regulatory body for that profession. Not one word of consultation with them or with any of the professional organizations representing teachers. Why did that announcement come out of the blue? I suspect, if you got a chance to take a look at the polling that had been done for the Progressive Conservative Party, you would find that they found this is a hot-button item. Without any detail, without any explanation, without any probing of the validity of this or the effectiveness of this, they just know if they say, "We're going to recertify teachers, we're going to require them to be recertified," that would hit some note of public response and be popular.

Interjection.

Let me ask the member opposite, who's kind of yipping in the corner there, how are you going to implement this testing? What are you going to test, sir? Are you going to test what the teacher knows? Is that going to tell you how good a teacher they are in the classroom? What method is there for evaluating their effectiveness as a teacher? There is no known process for recertification in that profession.

In terms of all the other self-regulated professions, there isn't a recertification process because there is an ongoing evaluation based on the results that come out of that person's work, whether you are a brain surgeon, whether you are an accountant, whether you are a lawyer or whether you are a teacher. There is no known recertification or evaluation procedure other than what's already in place through the management structures within the board: working with teachers, looking at the

results in their classrooms, listening to parent feedback, student feedback, observing. That's not what this government's talking about; they're talking about a recertification.

I ask you: What will you test? You can easily test what a teacher knows. You can't easily test how well they teach. That I would like an answer to from this government. I quite frankly don't believe there is an answer. I believe this is yet again just another election hot button that has no basis in any kind of study. Obviously, they've not talked to anybody. They set up the College of Teachers and they haven't had one word of consultation with them about this. I don't believe they've spoken to the Education Improvement Commission. I don't believe they've spoken to any of the professional associations representing professional educators. So where did the idea come from? What is it based on? What is it modelled on? Perhaps one of the members opposite will be able to answer that question.

In the closing minutes I have, I want to talk about children. Oh, there is so much that I would like to say, but let me begin with one of the most bizarre scenes that took place last week. A very well-respected and noted authority on early childhood development, Dr Fraser Mustard, released a report that he co-authored. The Premier was there beside him, embracing the findings of the report, the centre of which was to reaffirm what we have known for many years, and what many of us have argued in this place for many years, that the earlier you are involved with children in stimulating healthy development the more you can ensure a long, healthy and prosperous life in the sense of being able to live it to its fullest with good health and with a good opportunity for education. The earlier you can identify problems and set in place remedial programming the better off children are.

We've known for a long time that those early years from zero to six, particularly zero to three, are the most formative in terms of how a child's brain develops. The kind of stimulation they get and the kind of exposure to educational opportunities they get in that early period of time, that early stimulation, forms the brain patterns and how they learn for the rest of their life. We've known that for a long time, but the Premier just discovered it last week when he was there with Fraser Mustard.

The body of Fraser Mustard's report says that there should be established in every community an early childhood development centre and parenting resource centre that would fold into it child care arrangements, JK and senior kindergarten. That would all be brought together in an early childhood development centre and parenting resource centre in every community. The Premier said: "We're going to move ahead. We're going to have six pilot projects on this."

The problem is that in 1993 or 1994 when the Royal Commission on Learning came out and recommended that we needed to have an establishment of an early childhood development centre in every community and integrate child care together with that, together with junior kindergarten, that Premier stood on his feet and

said it was the stupidest idea he had ever heard. The 13 pilot projects that had been established by the previous New Democratic Party government, that had been put in place to try and work through the process of integrating these new early childhood development centres with child care centres and junior kindergarten, were cancelled by this government because the Premier said it was the stupidest idea he had ever heard.

Yet again — and I guess it's OK to learn along the way — how are we to expect that this Premier will follow through on something that he has clearly been opposed to for all of his political years? He has clearly said, and many members of his caucus in this House have stood and said, that it is not the job of government, it is not the job of the community to play a role in supporting positive parenting and supporting early childhood development. Kids aren't anyone's responsibility until they hit school, until they hit senior kindergarten or grade 1. They cancelled funding for junior kindergarten and yet now they want us to believe that they support the need for and the understanding of the importance of early childhood development.

I have a hard time buying that. I have a hard time buying a lot of the rhetoric that I see on the television ads, that I hear from the ministers or from the Premier and the responses they make in this House, and in particular in the plethora of announcements that have been made across the province, all of which are without much substance, all of which promise a future that is bright and glowing, all of which refuse to acknowledge the pain that has been exacted on this province and the citizens of this province by many of the actions of this very government.

That is not leadership, so when they talk about leadership, when they talk about taking tough decisions and having a tough leader, when they talk about the leadership for the future, that is not my vision of a leadership which brings communities together, a leadership which builds for the future, a leadership which believes all of its citizens are important, a leadership which makes accommodations for persons with disabilities, a leadership which builds for children and their future, a leadership which recognizes the importance and sanctity of a universally accessible health system. That's not leadership, and I sure hope that this province is not subjected to any more of that kind of leadership in the future.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): I would like to respond to the comments made by the member for Beaches-Woodbine. She has addressed the issue of teacher testing, and while this is certainly in the formative stages and while she says there is no test and there can't be a test, I come from a profession where 10 years ago there was no retesting and there now is. There has to be an idea before there can be a test designed.

Certainly the test or the idea isn't designed with the purpose of being antagonistic towards teachers. The indications are that students will benefit from a higher quality of teacher, and while 90% or 95% of the teachers in the province are very good — we know that — there

are some who aren't and do require some remedial work. Those who failed the test, of course, would require that remedial work.

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In Texas, there was retesting done in the 1980s. While that retesting is no longer done, Dan Goldhaber, a research associate with the Urban Institute in Washington, DC, says that a study found that Texas school districts in which teachers had higher average performance on the test enjoyed higher student performance in math. This was in the *Toronto Star* on April 21 of this year. So there is evidence to prove that such testing is beneficial to the student. That, of course, is what it's all about: improving the performance of the student. We all know that higher performance by the student in the early stages is going to benefit that student as he or she gets older.

M. Lalonde : Encore une fois, je dois dire que la députée de Beaches-Woodbine a touché beaucoup de points. Le point qui m'a le plus frappé dans son allocution est la santé.

Nous savons tous que ce gouvernement a pris un coup-teu et a coupé beaucoup d'aide financière à nos hôpitaux. Nos hôpitaux sont pleins et fermés quelquefois, mais on doit aussi réduire le nombre de services. J'ai une lettre ici qui m'a touché lorsque je l'ai reçue vendredi dernier. Je vais en lire seulement un paragraphe. C'est adressé à M^{me} la ministre :

«Vous réclamez que toutes les coupures que vous effectuez au système de santé ont le but d'améliorer notre système. En même temps, vous dites que la santé des citoyens n'est pas affectée ou menacée. Vous déniez l'existence de longues listes d'attentes, prétendant que ces histoires sont fabriquées pour des jeux politiques.»

J'ai ici une personne qui a attendu un pontage à Ottawa. Il aurait eu sa confirmation le 11 mars dernier. On recule seulement un mois et demi. Puis, à la dernière minute, manque de lits à l'hôpital, on a dû reporter son opération à plus tard. Mais, la méchante nouvelle est que cette personne, M. Desjardins, est décédée neuf jours après qu'il attendait un pontage.

Ensuite, on va dire que le gouvernement n'a procédé à aucune coupure. Nous savons que le gouvernement se chante sur les toits des maisons. Il dit qu'on a rajouté, qu'on a injecté plus de 1 \$ milliard. C'est faux.

Quand je dis que c'est faux, c'est parce que nous avons 400 \$ millions qui étaient envers le congédiement ou la prime de départ de nos infirmières. Nous avons un autre 375 \$ milliards pour les ré-emboucher. Nous avons ici en Ontario le plus bas nombre d'infirmières par mille personnes ontariennes, qui est 6,9 sur mille personnes.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I've worked with the member for Beaches-Woodbine for a number of years now, and I want to say to this House that one of the things I've noticed about her is that she's fair. When she perceives or thinks that the government has done something right, done something good for our community, for our province, she's one of those politicians who will say that loudly and clearly.

When the member for Beaches-Woodbine points out problems with issues, particularly around issues that she's very familiar with — for instance, when she speaks about the problems with the lack of legislation for disabled people — she speaks from a well of knowledge, from dealing with this issue for a number of years. She speaks to it with a great deal of passion, but also a great deal of understanding and a great deal of knowledge from constant consultation and contact with those in our communities who are drastically and negatively affected by this lack of legislation.

I feel offended, when the member for Beaches-Woodbine is talking about these problems, when she in fact reaches out and offers her assistance, which she has done on numerous occasions — I know she has on the new Child and Family Services Act numerous times; she spoke about that today. Over months she had asked the Minister of Community and Social Services to hold hearings. She didn't want to hold up that legislation, but there were a number of issues there that needed to be dealt with. Her offer of support and help to actually improve on the bill was turned down and she was accused publicly of trying to stop this important piece of legislation. I am offended when government members continue to insult that member in that way, when my experience with her, as in her speech today, continually is to try and help and improve legislation.

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): I would like to say, as the minister responsible for the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, that I find it absolutely politically outrageous and grandstanding on the part of the member for Beaches-Woodbine to take this approach of flip-flopping here. For five years when you were in government you didn't bring in an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Then you say that you will settle it in 10 days. You were accusing me of trying to not listen to what the disabled community wanted. I said clearly that we as a government are listening. They asked us to consult more before we moved forward with the bill.

Second, you don't seem to be able to get your act together as a party. Your leader sent a letter to ODAC two weeks saying that if you were elected you would introduce an act in two years, and now you are calling for it to be introduced and completed and passed in 10 days.

We as a government are listening to what the Ontarians with disabilities community has requested and we are moving forward. We did introduce an act that I felt would in time remove the barriers for people with disabilities in every single ministry and all the dealings they have across the province.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Beaches-Woodbine, you have two minutes.

Ms Lankin: I appreciate the responses of all of the members. I want to begin with the minister. Quite frankly, you seem to have forgotten that the NDP government introduced and passed and implemented employment equity legislation in this province, legislation which you tore up and threw out, legislation which

helped people have access to jobs. You've not replaced that with anything meaningful.

The next step in this province was to introduce an Ontarians with Disabilities Act. You've had four years in government, four years of having made a commitment in the Common Sense Revolution that you were going to implement this legislation, a commitment you made, Minister, and your Premier made to persons with disabilities in this province, which you have failed to live up to.

Then when you bring a bill in, it is an insult. For you to continue to stand and say you think it would have done the job in the long run when everyone knows all it was was a review within ministries — I will also remind you that those systemic barrier reviews were in place before your government was elected. You cancelled those. You cancelled the fund of money to bring about the change and the removal of barriers.

Hon Ms Bassett: We did not.

Ms Lankin: Don't tell me you didn't; it's a matter of public record. When will you guys at least start admitting and taking responsibility for the actions you have taken to tear down positive steps which have been taken to help persons with disabilities in this province?

You have had how many months since the House adjourned and you're now coming and saying that you're going to consult? They asked you last December to meet with them right away to consult about the bill, to redraft the bill, to work with them to redraft the bill, and months later, on the eve of an election, you say now you're going to go out and consult. Please, don't try to fool people and suggest that that is in any way a response to what that community has asked you for.

You stood in that meeting last week and you said to them, "I'm coming to you today and I can't tell you when we're going to consult, how long we're going to consult for or what shape the consultation is going to take." If you knew that you were responding to their demands you would have had a plan, you would have put it in place before that. Don't think anyone will be fooled by your shallow attempts at this point in time.

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The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Wettlaufer: When I came into elected politics four years ago we had a provincial debt in this province that was so great that the previous government had actually considered declaring bankruptcy. We also had a health care system that had left my region, the Waterloo region, with health care that was equated by some of the experts as equivalent to that of a Third World country. That in the fifth-fastest-growing region in all of Canada, the third-fastest-growing region in Ontario, a region that is considered one of the most important economically in the country.

But it was a region that had returned Liberals for 30 years, and nobody ever cared. The Liberals were in power from 1985 to 1990 and they did nothing to rectify the health care system in our region. In the past four years we have rectified much of that in my region.

In 1995 we had an education system that was producing university graduates at a greater per capita rate than any other country on earth, but we were not providing those graduates with the learning required to obtain a job in the changing job market of the 1990s let alone the next millennium.

We had a rising crime rate. I'm not talking about the statistics that are commonly quoted in the media. I'm talking about the crime rate which our police forces see regularly and which places their lives at daily risk.

I wanted to be part of a government at that time that I knew would respond to the concerns: health care, education and crime. I wanted the youth of our province to have the qualifications necessary to meet the needs they were going to have in the new millennium.

In addition, I realized at that time, as did many other citizens of this province, that the greatest threat to our social safety net was the accumulated debt in this province, a debt that was going up at the rate of \$10 billion a year because that's what the rate of the deficit was, the annual deficit. We have reduced that.

There were studies galore over a 10-year period about the necessity of meeting the changing health needs, about the necessity to meet the needs of the aging population. We knew what the changing demographics were in the province but the two previous governments did absolutely nothing about them. What happened? How come we did not have cancer care in those parts of the province that did not have teaching hospitals? How come we did not have cardiac care in those parts of the province that did not have teaching hospitals? How come we did not have an increasing number of MRIs? How come we did not have these until our government came to power? Well, we do have them now.

There is something else that we have to discuss when we're talking about health care needs in this province because they are the same health care needs elsewhere in the country. We see news media stories, we read them, we see them on TV daily about the problems across the country, about nursing and doctor shortages, hospital cutbacks. When we have a provincial government in this province that increased health care from \$17.4 billion in 1995 to \$18.9 billion this fiscal year, when we have other provincial governments throughout the country increasing health care spending, why do we have these problems? The reason is because the federal Liberals made such drastic cutbacks. When our Premier asked for the assistance of the Liberal leader, Mr McGuinty, to help him in encouraging the federal government to increase spending, where was Mr McGuinty? He did not respond. He was not there.

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): Nowhere. Missing in action.

Mr Wettlaufer: He sure was missing in action.

In the region of Waterloo we've got more money flowing into home care, we've got more money flowing into long-term care. In Kitchener, Waterloo and the immediate surrounding area we've got an increase in the number of home care beds of 12,600. There was not a

reinvestment by either of the two previous governments in home care beds.

Is there anyone in this House who thinks that the health care system wasn't made worse by the federal Liberal cutbacks? I don't hear a no. Then why didn't the provincial Liberals come on side with our Premier in encouraging the federal Liberals to increase spending in health care? They were nowhere to be seen.

Everyone knows that health care spending can be improved by an improved economy, and that equates with lower taxes. This is not Wayne Wettlaufer, the member for Kitchener, speaking; this is an observance that I have made in much of the media. Many of the experts say that the economy has improved because of the tax cuts that we have made in this province.

Let's just look at this, the *Globe and Mail*, November 23, 1998: "Ontario's efforts to improve its business climate are paying off in jobs." We have had in four years a 540,000 net increase in the number of jobs in this province.

What is that doing then? We said all along, if you will recall, in the 1995 campaign, we have said it in all of the committees, we have been saying it to the media, we have been saying it to everyone who would listen over the last four years, that people would spend that increase. Have they spent their net increase in income? Yes, they have.

We have numbers on the net increase in income from retail sales tax revenue. It has gone up from \$9 billion in 1995-96 to \$11.4 billion in 1998-99. How is that possible if we haven't had an increase in retail sales tax? I vaguely recall that there has been no change. It's simply because people are spending more and more of their hard-earned money, money that we have given them back in their tax cuts, and it is reflected in an increase in retail sales tax revenues to the province.

We have had a net increase in revenue to the province, not just in retail sales tax but in other areas, a total revenue increase to Ontario from 1995 to 1998-99 to the tune of \$4 billion, a 10% increase, and that's with tax cuts. That improves the economy. A healthy economy means more jobs, it means more investment, it means more revenue to provide to health care, to education, and we have done that. We have provided those increases to health care and education.

We have an economy that is growing faster than any other G7 nation. We have an economy that is growing faster than any other province in Canada in spite of the fact that the other provinces also trade with the United States, our major trading partner. Our critics, the Liberals and the NDP, commonly say, "Of course you're doing well, because the American economy is so strong." We're outstripping the American economy in growth.

As far as education is concerned, why are we focusing so much on improving high-tech education for the students in Ontario? By the year 2020 we will have to have a much greater increase in high-tech education if our students are to stay in Canada. If we don't, they will go to the United States. Right now, in spite of the tax cuts this

government has made, our tax rates in Canada are 10 points higher than jurisdictions in the United States, and students will go to the United States after graduation if our taxes aren't brought down. Also, the high-tech industry in the United States is multiplying. It's multiplying at a rate equivalent to ours. They will provide jobs for our students, unless we improve the high-tech education here and unless we continuously cut taxes.

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An apprenticeship in a skilled trade is seen as the second most valuable workforce education — 24% of the students surveyed — followed by a university degree in science, and that we know is extremely important. We are constantly focusing as a government on improving education in science. Nevertheless, the students and employers recognize that high-tech education is even more important. In 10 years we will have to be producing more and more graduates with high-tech education. This study was done by Ernst and Young and it was reported in the *Globe and Mail* on November 23, 1998.

There was an article in *Maclean's* magazine February 15, 1999, and there was much concern about the middle class eroding. The article was written by Mary Janigan, and it's one of the best articles I have seen on what the future holds for our young people and of course the aging population. It talks about taxes, it talks about research and development, education and training. It talked about taxes taking their toll. Mary Janigan quoted Tim Paquette of Roxboro, Quebec, as saying, "I find that the more I make, the less I make — because the tax rate is so high." Ms Janigan goes on to say:

"Canadians do not just feel poorer; they are poorer. The Royal Bank of Canada calculates that real disposable income per person dropped to \$16,332 in 1998 — down from \$17,292 in 1990."

That's a \$1,000 reduction in only eight years and this is all taxes. As a result, tax loads will encourage Ontarians to move out of the country. We had to reduce taxes and the evidence is there that the reduction did in fact improve the economy in this province.

Interjection.

Mr Wettlaufer: Until 1998. The total tax burden for Canadians remains at a record high, and we are improving their lot. We would like some co-operation from the federal Liberals who still believe in the Liberal philosophy of tax and spend, spend and tax, but of course we don't expect any support from the provincial Liberals in encouraging the federal Liberals to reduce taxes because they themselves don't believe in reducing taxes. In their budget that they're talking about in their new 20/20 Plan, they're talking about an increase in spending of \$2.1 billion. It was interesting that Sid Ryan, who is running for the NDP now in one of the ridings in Toronto, even said that what that the Liberal's 20/20 Plan will amount to is an increase of \$20 billion in debt by the year 2020.

It's important to point out that between 1988 and 1998 Ontario was the hardest-hit province in terms of loss of jobs. Yes, that was partly the recession, but many financial experts indicate that the recession in Ontario was

partly homegrown. In fact, some of them have said that it was significantly homegrown because of the increase in spending that was begun by the Liberals in 1988 and they indicated that the balanced budget that the Liberals in fact introduced in 1989-90 was not a balanced budget, that in fact it was not in balance at all. It was a deficit. And how much was it?

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): It was \$8.5 billion.

Mr Wettlaufer: It was \$8.5 billion. How about that?

Of course, the rising tax rate of the NDP contributed greatly to the recession in the early 1990s, simply because businesses were not willing to invest in the province of Ontario because there was nothing in it for them.

There is article after article in the media these days talking about the benefits of the lower taxes, the job surge. They talk about the importance of the federal government's cutting taxes, if they would only do so.

There was one in the Kitchener-Waterloo Record. It was an editorial last year, asking Paul Martin to please deliver relief, that while the nation's economy had grown \$25 billion since 1993, most Canadians had in fact seen little of that money. Average disposable incomes actually were falling in the past five years, which I indicated from a previous article. Again, this article attributes this loss in disposable income to the government's continually grabbing more taxes, whether it was the federal or provincial government, up until 1995.

Health care has improved in this province. It's going to improve a whole lot more as a result of the actions we have taken. Nobody wants to talk about the increase in funding that our government has made as a result of the increased revenues that we have in this province.

It's interesting. I read this letter to the editor from the Kitchener-Waterloo Record just recently. Dalton McGuinty is blaming us for the mess in Ontario hospitals. "Does Dalton McGuinty blame Harris for the other nine provinces doing exactly the same thing?" That was written by Annie Ross of Kitchener. Of course, we know that everything that's going on in this province is going on in other jurisdictions as well.

The health care in this province is definitely improving. In fact, David MacKinnon, who is the president of the Ontario Hospital Association, recently stated that the just-released federal government statistics showed that Ontario is projected to have the highest rates of health care spending growth in the country. David MacKinnon supported that, of course.

We know that the federal government has recently given us back nearly \$900 million of the money they took in the early 1990s. They took \$2.8 billion; they've given us \$900 million back. Most of the recent announcements on the increased investment in health care have come from that \$900-million fund that the federal Liberals have given us.

However, we're still short by nearly \$2 billion. When is that going to come? They tell us it's going to come over five years. That's what the provincial Liberals are talking about in the increased money that they are going

to give to health care. It's all going to come from the federal government. They're not going to do anything different. In fact, we've got a vision that they don't have.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Crozier: I am going to read my reply. You might say, "How can he do that?"

The Acting Speaker: Will you start the clock again for two minutes, please.

Mr Crozier: I'll start where I started. I'm going to read my reply. You might ask, "Well, how could you do that?" It's very predictable what the member for Kitchener was going to say.

The Toronto Star, Sunday, February 7, 1999, editorial: "Ontario laid off all the \$2.8 billion a year it lost in federal cash transfers, Canadian health and social transfers....on students and the poor. And the tax points Ottawa also provided — now pushing an extra \$2 million a year into Ontario coffers — were spent on tax cuts rather than invested in cheaper care, the real reform health care needed."

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The member for Kitchener asked these questions.

Reductions in social assistance funding: Provincial funding went from \$6.3 billion in 1994-95 to \$4.15 billion in 1998-99, down \$2.25 billion. This funding level takes into account \$654 million in increased municipal payments due to downloading. The biggest slice of the cut came from a \$938-million reduction in social assistance rates. Education took a \$1-billion hit, and seniors took a \$200-million hit on the Ontario drug benefit plan. Here's where they come from, member for Kitchener. You asked where the money will come from. You're getting it already.

CHST tax points for Ontario have gone from \$4.2 billion in 1995 to \$5.5 billion in 1999, an increase of \$1.3 billion. But it's interesting to note that of the total provincial debt, the Liberals are responsible for \$5 billion, the NDP for \$40 billion and the Tories for \$75 billion, up 17% since the Taxfighter took office.

Ms Churley: The member for Kitchener talked a lot about taxes towards the end. Mr Speaker, you may remember this. I recall when Mr Harris, the Premier, who was sitting right over here somewhere, talked about user fees, when he would lambaste the then NDP government for raising user fees. He kept saying: "A user fee is a tax. It's the same thing. There is only one taxpayer." Mr Harris, the Premier, seems to have forgotten that now as his government has either created or raised hundreds of user fees across this province, but it's not considered a tax any more.

Right across this province, as a result of the downloading to our municipalities which came about because of those tax cuts, more and more average Canadians and poor Canadians are getting hit with user fees, so with the little bit of tax cut they're getting back, if they are not among that 6% who are really benefiting, they are getting a few dollars in this pocket, and more than they're getting back is coming out of this pocket.

Just today, because of Mel Lastman's promise to not raise taxes after the megacity was created, city council agreed on what seem to be dozens of user fees, from death registration to birth registration, block parties, you name it. People are going to have to pay for that. People are paying more for tuition and all kinds of other services. When you're talking about tax cuts, you can't turn a blind eye to what's going on on the other side. If people are being slapped with user fees, which indeed is what's happening, they are still being taxed. This government, like Mel Lastman, can say, "We haven't raised taxes," but in fact they have.

M. Bernard Grandmaître (Ottawa-Est) : Je vais m'adresser dans ma langue maternelle — que je parle la langue de Shakespeare ou maternelle, je sais que le gouvernement n'est pas à l'écoute, mais peut-être qu'on va prendre l'appareil pour écouter mes quelques commentaires.

Le député de Kitchener parle de l'économie reluisante de l'Ontario et des emplois qu'ils ont créés — 540 000 emplois depuis leur arrivée au pouvoir — et de tous leurs bienfaits dans le domaine de la santé, dans le domaine de l'éducation, et puis que les revenus en Ontario ont augmenté de milliards de dollars. Ma question est simple : si l'économie de l'Ontario est si reluisante, comment se fait-il que le gouvernement de l'Ontario a emprunté, ou augmenté la dette provinciale de 22 \$ milliards par année ? On parle de tous les bienfaits, mais par contre, on a fallu augmenter la dette provinciale de 25 %.

On peut questionner les chiffres des partis de l'opposition, mais laissez-moi vous dire que le gouvernement actuel n'est pas conscient des dettes qu'ils ont accumulées, et depuis qu'ils sont au pouvoir en Ontario, ils ont augmenté la dette provinciale de 75 %. Pour répondre à mon collègue de Kitchener, il demandait où était Dalton McGuinty lorsqu'il a été invité par M. le premier ministre d'aller visiter le ministre des Finances. M. Harris disait que le fédéral n'avait pas assez coupé.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson) : The member's time has expired. Further comments and questions?

Mr Bisson : Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and welcome back to the chair. I'm glad to see you back in the Legislature again, along with the rest of us, dealing with some of the issues that are important to the people of Ontario generally.

To the member for Kitchener, a very interesting discourse, I must say. I guess it was some time around Christmastime that I had an opportunity to go back and read a book on Joseph Goebbels. I remember reading in that book where he talked about how if you say something often enough and you sound convincing enough, somehow people are going to believe it because you repeat it and you sound convincing.

I just want to clarify the record on a few things. The member talked about how his government, the Mike Harris government, was the first government in Ontario to expand the MRI system. Sorry, member for Kitchener; it wasn't the case. It was the NDP government, and at the time Ruth Grier as Minister of Health, that expanded the

MRI system. Why do I know that? Because my community was one of the many communities which benefited from the MRI decision of the former NDP government. Yes, your government continued our program, but it was set up by the NDP.

Cancer care : Sorry again, member for Kitchener. It was very convincing, but again it was a former Minister of Health, Frances Lankin, who set up the cancer care initiative that was put in place by the then NDP government, and followed through by the Conservatives, I must say. So I just want to make sure you get your dates right.

On the question of cardiac care, again, if you say it often enough maybe they'll believe it, but I remember because the cardiac care initiative was something that was started by the NDP.

Then the member went on to talk about long-term care. It was our government that started the whole initiative, redirection of long-term care, both at the institutional level, where there was a restructuring institutionally which put funding into the system, but also in community long-term care, where investments were made and a multi-service agency system was put in place.

So if you say it often enough maybe they'll believe it, but I won't because I was there; I know who started all that.

The Deputy Speaker : The member for Kitchener has two minutes to respond.

Mr Wettlaufer : It's certainly an eye-opener to see how somebody, just because they put into place a program, even though it hasn't done anything, wants to take credit for it. Not one long-term-care bed, in spite of what the member for Cochrane South says, was created as a result of their government being in power. The long-term-care beds were put in place only after our government came to power. It's great to have a program, but if you don't do anything with it, it doesn't mean much.

As far as the Liberals are concerned, they should be fully aware that the interest rate that is being paid by this government is the sole reason why there is an increase in the debt. That interest rate came about because of the two previous governments' spending habits.

It takes a little time to get things straightened around, but I can assure you we've got them straightened around and all of the economic experts, the financial experts worldwide, are looking at us and saying, "Yes, you've done a good job."

The Deputy Speaker : The Chair recognizes the member for Sudbury.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury) : Mr Speaker, I believe there's unanimous consent that I split my time with the member for Ottawa East.

The Deputy Speaker : Is there unanimous consent that the member for Sudbury split his time? It is agreed.

Mr Bartolucci : When I was looking over the speech from the throne this weekend, I thought of the wise saying I once heard or read that said, "No one is rich enough to buy back his past." I thought that was so appropriate with the speech from the throne, because the reality is that no matter what the Mike Harris government does, it

will definitely not be able to have the people of Ontario forget what he's done over the course of the last four years.

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It's interesting, as I read the speech from the throne, that there are 12 pages; there are 4,687 words. He mentioned the United States of America four times. He mentioned the New York Times. He mentioned the Wall Street Journal and the Washington Post. But do you know what he didn't mention? He didn't mention northern Ontario. He didn't refer to northern Ontario — not once.

I never saw the word "north" on Thursday. I never heard the word "north" mentioned in the speech from the throne. This after the Premier knows that since the last session there has been a growing discontent among northerners. A notable number of northerners feel that they are isolated, they're forgotten and they're disenfranchised by this government. Does that matter to Mike Harris and to the Mike Harris government? Obviously not, because the north was not mentioned once in the speech from the throne.

As we go through my 10 minutes, I'd like to highlight only a few areas of the speech from the throne, the first area being early childhood education. We refer to that on page 8. Obviously, the project done by Dr Fraser Mustard is an important project. The reality is, the findings of Dr Fraser Mustard are not new to this government. Fraser Mustard himself had mentioned them in years past. The opposition party have mentioned them in years past. There had been, in fact, initiatives taken by both the previous Liberal government and the previous New Democratic government to ensure that early childhood education was addressed in a meaningful way.

The response of Mike Harris at that time was: "These ideas are the dumbest ideas I've ever heard of." This is from the Premier, who over the course of the last three years has cut millions of dollars out of junior kindergarten programs, millions of dollars out of senior kindergarten programs. But an election is near and all of a sudden children become the priority of Mike Harris. His actions do not reflect the words he speaks, for in the latest grants to school boards there is a \$66-million reduction to the early learning grant. I'd like to spend just a few minutes telling the House what that translates to with regard to full-day senior kindergarten programs.

As many members of the House know, approximately 16,145 students, or 11% of senior kindergarten students, are enrolled in a full-day senior kindergarten program. In the Toronto area, 5% are involved in full-day programs. In southeastern Ontario 20% are involved in full-day programs, in southwestern Ontario 11% are involved in full-day senior kindergarten programs and in northern Ontario 49% of senior kindergarten students are involved in full-day programs. The reality is those 16,145 students are going to have their programs slashed dramatically.

What has happened? The Rainbow District School Board in Sudbury has cut its program in half. The Niagara Catholic District School Board is holding off its

decision having to do the same thing because they're hoping the government will reconsider their slash to senior kindergarten programming to the early learning grants, understanding the importance of early learning, early childhood education, on the growth of the individual child and the total development of the child. The reality is I have a sneaking suspicion that the Niagara Catholic District School Board is waiting in vain.

What does this mean, though? If you look at the people who are offering full-day kindergarten programs, you'll see that northern school boards, Catholic school boards, French public and Catholic school boards, and small and isolate boards are the ones that are offering these programs because they understand that because of their geographical location it is extremely important that these children get the opportunities they need in a senior kindergarten program which is full day.

Mike Harris and the Tory government simply don't get the message that in different geographical areas the needs of students are going to be different and, because the needs are different, we have to prioritize them differently. The reality is, the one-size-fits-all solution with the funding formula is absolutely no solution at all.

I'd like to address another area of the speech from the throne that I believe is important: when the Premier in his speech talks about the road to prosperity. Again, I'd like to address the north. I would like the Premier to tell the people in Sudbury that the road to prosperity is being paved for them. I'd like the Premier to tell the people in Sault Ste Marie, which has one of the highest unemployment rates in Canada, that the road to prosperity is being paved for them. I would like the Premier or the Tory government to tell northeastern Ontario, which has the worst unemployment rate of any region in Ontario, that the road to prosperity is being paved for them. The reality is that none of that is true.

I have asked the Minister of Finance to verify and prove the 540,000 private sector net new jobs that he says he's created. I asked the ministry and the minister to tell me the number of jobs in northern Ontario. Can't do it. I asked him to tell me the number of jobs in northeastern Ontario that have been created by this government. Can't do it. I asked him to tell me the number of jobs that he created in the city of Sudbury. Can't do it. I asked him to tell me the number of jobs that he created in the city of Sault Ste Marie. Can't do it.

The reality is that this government uses figures very, very creatively. In fact, he cannot justify and tell anyone in this House or the people of Ontario where those 540,000 jobs come from, if in fact 540,000 jobs is an accurate figure, and this comes from the Ministry of Finance, which helped paint the picture in the speech from the throne that there is a road to prosperity in Ontario.

I'd like to inform the House for a few seconds about the layoffs that have occurred in the Human Rights Commission in northern Ontario. At one time there were 15 staff employed in the Human Rights Commission. In 1997, there was a restructuring and the Kenora and the

Sault Ste Marie offices were closed, resulting in four staff being let go. In April of 1998, the northern manager was let go in another restructuring. With this latest new announcement that just took place, there are now in essence only two employees in northern Ontario in the Human Rights Commission.

I use that because those are small, simple numbers that everybody in the House can understand. Multiply that when you go to the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines, multiply that when you go to the Ministry of Natural Resources, multiply that when you talk about the Ministry of the Environment, multiply that when you talk about the Ministry of Transportation. Those are the numbers of jobs that this government, that Mike Harris has taken out of northern Ontario. We wonder why northerners feel disenfranchised by this government.

The reality is the speech from the throne left little hope for northern Ontario and northern Ontarians. Thank God there is a 20/20 Plan in place to take over after this government is defeated.

Mr Grandmaître: This will be my last response to a throne speech in this House.

Interjection.

Mr Grandmaître: Thank you, Jack.

Mr Crozier: But he's going to be a special guest at the next one.

Mr Grandmaître: I hope so, on the floor.

For the first time in my 15 years at Queen's Park I will have to agree with Christina Blizzard. It was bland, no news. She's absolutely right. Even the horses that were waiting for the Lieutenant Governor were yawning. This was the worst throne speech ever written and she felt very uncomfortable.

Mr Carroll: Be nice.

2010

Mr Grandmaître: I am being nice, because she is a great lady. But the speech was lousy, Jack, and you had to punish this poor lady to deliver this poor throne speech.

I didn't expect the government to have a very upbeat throne speech for the simple reason that they don't want to talk about the last four years in government.

I'm still active in my riding and will be until the day after the election. Strange, but I don't think the government members are hearing the same message or messages that we're hearing at the doors. I was out last weekend knocking on doors in my riding for the next Liberal member representing Ottawa-Vanier. We're changing our name, changing our member, so it's going to be a clean sweep.

Let me tell you that people at the doors were asking us questions about health care, education, seniors, our colleges, universities, and especially downloading. Like downtown Ottawa, I can tell you that Ottawa-Carleton is very, very concerned.

You will recall that when the downloading program was introduced, it was supposed to be cost-neutral, but the government decided to withdraw \$1 billion from our local government in Ontario. Oh, they can brag about

balancing their budget, but the real problem is that next year — not this year, because most of our municipalities in Ontario have balanced their budgets. And it's a good thing because next year, as you know, they won't be receiving any kind of financial support from the provincial government because municipal grants are gone, and I mean gone for good.

This will mean that municipal governments will have to increase taxes to provide services that this government has downloaded on to their backs, such as health care and housing, especially social housing. We have a good share of social housing located in the city of Ottawa. Let me tell you, they're very, very concerned. The regional government, which is now responsible for social housing or will be responsible for social housing, simply can't afford to spend \$10 billion for the upkeep of these units. Most of them were built back in the 1970s and they need repairs, at least \$3 billion of repairs. Where will local government find these dollars? On the backs of local taxpayers.

Another big issue is school closings. In the Ottawa-Carleton area, as throughout the province, since the new legislation was introduced school boards have been looking for additional help for the simple reason that the financing formula is not responding to the real needs of our school boards. They are working very hard with parents, students and teachers as well. This government loves to bash teachers, but at least they're part of the decision-making process and they're trying to help the government, but I guess this government has all the answers. No consultation; they have all the answers.

When it comes to education — and I was listening to my friend from Kitchener talking about colleges and universities — I'd like to remind this government that they have increased the tuition fees in our universities by 60% and now they're expecting our young people to run to university and enrol in high-tech and so on and so forth, and they simply can't afford it. This is why Dalton McGuinty and our 20/20 plan vision are trying to help these people. We will reduce the tuition fees by 10%. I know 10% may not sound like much to the members of the government, but I can tell you that it will be well appreciated.

I want to take a minute to talk about health care and what I was hearing at the doors: senior after senior, single mom after single mom, grandparents, complaining about our health care system. I've spoken to people who were put on the waiting list for months and months for major surgery, to cancer patients having to wait 16 and 20 weeks for radiation therapy.

This government can brag about our economy, but at the same time I think they are responsible for what's happening to our education system and to our health care. They want to balance the budget. I'd like to remind my friend from Kitchener that we were the only party, the only government that balanced the budget, back in 1989, and this is not coming from me, this is coming from the Auditor General. All he has to do is look up the figures

for 1989 and he will see that our budget was balanced at the time.

What I'm trying to say is that, fine, our economy in Ontario is growing. Our revenues have never been so much better. They are increasing every day. People are spending. I will agree with you that naturally retail sales tax is going up, but at the same time we are leaving maybe 30% of the population in need at the back of the bus. These people simply can't follow the rest of the crowd in Ontario. We should be ashamed. We have more homeless people on our streets today than ever before. We have people waiting for social housing for seven to eight years in the Ottawa-Carleton area and this government is saying, "Look, we're going to download this responsibility on to your regional government and they can find the money." We are short of \$30 million at the present time to provide equivalent services that were being offered only last year.

This is only the start, the beginning of more hospital closures because the government is not done yet with hospital closures, and they'll be closing more schools. We're going to have more people waiting for social housing. We're going to have more people waiting in our emergency rooms and they're dying in our emergency rooms at the present time.

Je vais quitter dans 30 secondes. Je voudrais parler de l'hôpital Montfort, le seul et unique hôpital francophone en Ontario. On veut le fermer. Le gouvernement de l'Ontario dit, «Nous sommes généreux envers les francophones. Nous sommes généreux lorsqu'on parle de services de santé.»

Il va falloir que l'hôpital général se présente en cour suprême combattre pour nos droits d'avoir des services de santé en français. Inacceptable. Pas un mot dans le discours du trône.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments?

M. Bisson : J'aimerais avoir l'occasion de dire publiquement à mon collègue d'Ottawa-Est — on sait qu'il ne se présentera pas dans les élections qui viennent — que j'ai eu la chance de travailler avec vous pendant neuf ans, quand on était au gouvernement comme à l'opposition. Je vous ai connu un peu quand vous étiez le ministre.

On n'est pas de la même couleur, monsieur Grand-maître, et des fois on n'a pas les mêmes idées, mais je sais que vous avez été un membre honnête pour les citoyens de votre comté, pour ceux que vous avez servis à travers le bureau du ministre en tant que membre du cabinet de M. Peterson, mais aussi ici à l'Assemblée.

Je veux répéter un peu ce que vous avez dit, avec ce qui est arrivé dans le discours du trône, envers les conservateurs, parce qu'on vous appelle, comme vous le savez, le père de la Loi 8. On sait que peut-être on a dû aller plus loin dans le temps, mais c'était un compromis, puis je pense que vous le reconnaissez.

Mais ce qui est intéressant c'est que, durant le discours du trône, il n'y a pas eu un mot concernant les affaires qui sont importantes pour la communauté francophone dans la province. Je penserais que le gouverne-

ment, après toutes les attaques sur la communauté francophone dans le domaine de la santé, dans les services qu'on utilise dans nos municipalités, aurait donné une petite miette même pour nous, la communauté francophone. Et comme le monde du nord, les francophones n'ont eu rien. Le gouvernement ne s'est pas engagé pour deux secondes, pour deux cents, sur aucune question qu'il aurait pu se présenter dessus.

Je pense qu'ils auraient pu dire au moins, «Le gouvernement conservateur de Mike Harris a fait une erreur avec l'hôpital Montfort», et que le gouvernement conservateur avait finalement reconnu qu'il avait fait une erreur et qu'il aurait pu renverser la décision qu'ils ont pris de réduire l'hôpital Montfort au point qu'il a été réduit. Une affaire que le gouvernement conservateur aurait pu faire pour la communauté francophone aurait été de renverser la décision envers l'hôpital Montfort. C'est quelque chose, je pense, qu'ils vont reconnaître dans les élections.

2020

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): I am very pleased to stand up in support of the speech by my colleague Mr Grandmaître from Ottawa-East who spoke briefly regarding the throne speech. All of us in the Liberal Party are amazed at what the throne speech did not contain. We had a great deal of difficulty listening to the throne speech and realizing that so much about the four-year track record of Mike Harris simply was not represented in the throne speech, not as it has affected the people in the riding of Windsor-Sandwich, soon to be the riding of Windsor West. As I go about meeting my constituents, when we talk about the effects of the provincial government, none of their comments were reflected in the throne speech given the other day by the Lieutenant Governor.

We heard about workfare, a program that really does not exist in Ontario. We heard today that the Premier was back at the SkyDome. I challenge the Premier of Ontario to go back to the SkyDome and fill it with all of the high-priced consultants who are now being paid by the Ontario government in a variety of forms. Send them into the SkyDome and let's see how many times we can fill it up.

Those were the kinds of issues that people are really concerned about, that kind of cycle of dependency that exists today in Ontario, people like Leslie Noble, Bill Farlinger, Paul Rhodes, and some very interesting pieces of information. For example, Bill Farlinger, who was of course a close friend of the Premier, now is making \$291,000 of taxpayers' money. That's just his salary; let's not even discuss his expenses. Leslie Noble: a Hydro contract of \$91,000 for strategic advice on how to deal with the provincial government. We have Glen Wright, the tour manager for Mike Harris during his last campaign and now the workers' comp chair pulling in \$244,000 a year. That's the kind of information the people of Windsor-Sandwich, soon to be Windsor West, wanted to hear: What would you do about those high-priced consultants? We didn't hear about that in the throne speech.

The Deputy Speaker: The member has two minutes to respond.

Mr Bartolucci: I'd like to thank both members who have responded. The reality is that the Mike Harris government, in the speech from the throne, has certainly defined what some people view a politician as, and that's a problem posing as a solution. The reality is there are no solutions found in the speech from the throne. There are only continuing problems for people who live in isolated areas, people who live in northern Ontario, people who live in situations with high unemployment.

If in fact this government was very serious about addressing the problems of the area I live in, they would have at least mentioned in the speech from the throne that there is indeed recognition that the north is important. That reality does not exist in the vocabulary or the government plan or the Common Sense Revolution of the Mike Harris agenda.

The reality is that the people of Ontario will be wide awake. They will be very focused. They will ensure that they know exactly what the issues are, what the solutions are for the three parties, and they will ensure that the Common Sense Revolution is over, that the rebuilding and restoration of Ontario takes place, that in fact the day after the election their vision will be 20/20, with Dalton McGuinty as the next Premier of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Bisson: What a bad sight that would be, I'll tell you. I don't think I can even stand that. Let's not go there. That thought is actually scary. There's nothing worse than the Tories or the Liberals in power.

The throne speech is the one opportunity, other than the budget speech, when we have an opportunity to comment on the government's agenda and the government's policies as a whole. I want to take the opportunity I have, 20 minutes, to speak about a couple of things that I think are very important to the people of the province, the people I represent in the northern part of the province, mainly the people from Cochrane South, and hopefully, if the voters allow, the new riding of Timmins-James Bay.

The government came down with its throne speech last week, and it was mentioned earlier that not one word was mentioned about the government's commitment to northern Ontario. I think that's significant. When you look at that — not a commitment to northern Ontario in the throne speech — and you look at what the government's actions have been in northern Ontario as of late and how it has been since they were elected in 1995, you begin to realize that this is a government that ran as a party and said: "We're going to go out there and do things differently. We're not going to allow those people at Queen's Park in Toronto to make all those decisions on their own in locked rooms." In fact, they've come to power and are basically the government that has the most centralist control of how they develop policy and legislation that I've seen in my time here at Queen's Park.

I want to mention a couple of issues, because I think they're very significant. The government — excuse me; I

shouldn't say "the government." Mike Harris in, I believe, February of this year decided on his own, by way of a press scrum one day, to ban the spring bear hunt. When I first heard that Mike Harris had said he had cancelled the spring bear hunt, I thought to myself, "It can't be."

Let me tell you how I found out. I went on holidays out of the country, and when I came back my staff had developed a briefing note for me to read about what had happened during the time I was on holidays. In the briefing note, there was a line in one particular section where they talked about how the Mike Harris government, through an announcement of the Premier, had indicated and announced that the spring bear hunt had been cancelled.

My reaction was that I thought my staff had put that into the briefing note in order to see if I was actually reading the thing, because even I didn't believe the Tories were stupid enough to cancel the spring bear hunt. So I came back to the office and talked to my staff on the Monday morning, and I said, "You guys really tried to get me on this one." They said: "No, Gilles, we're serious. Mike Harris has banned and cancelled the spring bear hunt." I couldn't believe it, for a number of reasons. One reason was — I wish we had cameras that I could point back into the House, because some of it would be hilarious. You looked like a big bear when you did that, Derwyn Shea, member from Toronto.

I remember talking to John Snobelen not longer ago than last summer, as Minister of Natural Resources, when our community of Timmins was basically being taken over by bears. Throughout the city of Timmins through the months of August and September, the bears, because of the lack of berries in the bush, had been coming into the city to eat out of garbage cans. The government, as we know, had decided to download the responsibility for trapping bears from MNR on to the municipality. The municipality of Timmins, like other municipalities, didn't have the money or the expertise to deal with the bear problem, and we were trying to get the provincial government, in this case Mr Snobelen, as Minister of Natural Resources, to do something about it.

I came down here and talked to John and to his parliamentary assistant and others on his staff. At the time, I was told by John, "Listen, we're going to try to do something about this." I said, "By the way, John, I'm hearing a rumour that you're trying to limit" — not cancel, limit — "the spring bear hunt next season in order to reduce the number of bears that can be taken out of each bear management unit in the spring of 1999." He said: "Gilles, we're not that crazy. We're not going to do that. Don't worry about it." I said, "Are you sure?" He said, "You can take that to the bank, Gilles." I said, "Okay, no problem."

2030

I have to take the Minister of Natural Resources at his word when he tells me they are not going to limit the spring bear hunt in the spring. Instead, what do we get? We get the Premier announcing a total cancellation.

I want to put on the record that this has got to be one of the stupidest decisions I've seen this government take. I see a couple of Tory backbenchers saying, "Yes, Gilles, we know what you mean." Being a backbencher in a Tory government must not be easy. I hope I don't ever get an opportunity — well, I know I won't as a Tory, let me tell you. The next time we go to government I'll be in the cabinet, so I won't see what those backbenchers look like any more.

Anyway, I want to tell you something. Some of you Toronto members have to hear this. You're supposedly doing something around the spring bear hunt that's going to protect those little orphan cubs. There is hardly — and I would go as far as saying there hasn't been a lactating sow shot in the spring bear hunt in at least the last 10 years, not one that I know of. I've had an opportunity to talk to outfitter after outfitter, conservation officers across the province, various people who hunt in the spring, and we all know that a lactating sow is out of season in the spring and you don't shoot them. No lactating sows are shot. When the lactating sows are shot is not in the spring; it's during the summer as nuisance bears, which you're going to have a lot more of now because you guys have done what you did, and also in the fall, because in the fall we're basically not allowed to set an *appât* — in English, it's setting a bait — in order to catch the bear; you can only do it in the spring.

People say, "Well, what does that have to do with anything?" Let me explain to you how you bear hunt. I'm not a bear hunter myself; it's not something that I do, but I like to do other forms of hunting. You set the bait so you can allow the bear to come in on the bait, and then you notice if there are any cubs around. That's how you find out if she's a lactating sow. You watch the bear come in, and basically you look at it for a while. If there are no cubs around, you know it's not a lactating sow, because a mother bear doesn't go too far away from her cubs. That's the reason we allow the baiting in the spring, in order to allow the hunters to identify if it's a lactating sow. In the fall, however, you're not allowed to bait. In fact, people go out and shoot whatever they see. That's the other time you shoot lactating sows.

I say to the government, give your head a shake. If you wanted to protect the cubs, you should have done something about the fall hunt — not that I would favour such a position — not the spring. In the long run, this decision will do more to orphan cubs in Ontario than any other thing you could have done.

Second, you have turned your back on an industry in northern Ontario called the outfitting industry. I know many people in Gogama, Chapleau, Cochrane and up around the Hearst area who are basically losing their businesses because of what this government has done by way of the cancellation of the spring bear hunt.

Then you top it all off after that by trying to negotiate some kind of a deal — you didn't even negotiate; you just basically made an offer — that pays each outfitter X amount of dollars for every bear that was taken in their BMU the year before. It doesn't do anything to talk about

compensation in the out years. It doesn't do anything as far as the government trying to find ways of helping those people to regear for a different type of activity within the tourist industry.

The very least you should have done, in my opinion, was to say, "We are going to move to cancel the spring bear hunt, but we're not going to do it for at least another year to allow those people who had a spring bear hunt sold this spring to finish, to do what they had to do," and then work with the outfitters' community and others to look at ways you're able to boost eco-tourism or other types of activities in the tourist industry for those outfitters to adjust and talk about fair compensation. But you didn't do that.

If it had been up to me, I would never have cancelled it in the first place, and I say here and now that I am opposed to what the government did, I don't think it was right and if I ever have the opportunity I will work like heck in order to reverse the decision made by the Tories on that point.

The other thing you did in northern Ontario was this whole thing that was called Lands for Life. I'm not going to go into a lot of detail, but I just want to say this: I have attended a lot of public meetings in northern Ontario over the last nine years as an elected member of this Legislature, and hardly ever have I seen the number of people who showed up at public meetings for the Lands for Life. They didn't go there to consult with the government, to say, "Let's try to find a way to make this work." People in communities across northeastern and northwestern Ontario went en masse to say: "You're going in the wrong direction. Put the brakes on. Stop. This is a bad idea."

If you want to create parks, let's look at creating parks in certain areas, but don't throw up all this land on the map and say that somehow you're going to develop a park system out of it, because we know what you're all about is changing the land use policies of the Ministry of Natural Resources, let alone what you're trying to do with parks.

The people of northern Ontario — the mining industry, the forest industry, the tourism industry, communities, cottagers, outfitters, anglers, native communities — all told you the same thing: "Get out of this. This is a bad idea. You're going to hurt the northern economy."

I was starting to think at one point that the government was going to put a hold on this whole thing because when the round tables came back with the recommendations, I guess more than 12 months ago, the government sat on the recommendations and did nothing with them. That's normally a sign that the government says: "We bit off more than we can chew and we're not going any further. This was a bad idea."

I talked to John Snobelen at one point and he said, "As Minister of Natural Resources I'm going to rein in this thing and I'm going to get this done before the next election." I thought, "I couldn't believe him around the spring bear hunt, so why should I believe him on this one?"

Instead they came back with this thing called Ontario's Living Legacy. Let me tell you, this is something that is going to be bad for the northern economy for years to come and most of you don't understand it.

Our economy in northern Ontario is based on a few things. One of the things it's based on is our forest industry. What you have done by way of the Living Legacy is to diminish the amount of land that is available to forest companies to harvest timber, but they still need to maintain a certain level of production because they've got mills that have to pay, that are based on a certain capacity. What you have done is limited the amount of forests they're able to cut in.

Your government signed a deal with these companies to say: "We'll fix that. We'll allow you to increase the yield on whatever's left on your FMA or on your forest sustainability licence." You're saying, "What does that mean?" It means they're going to cut it quicker. A forest is cut on a cycle, on a natural regeneration cycle of anywhere from 70 to 90 years, depending on the kind of trees and depending on where you're cutting them.

What you're going to do by way of this policy is say to those forest companies, "You can now cut on more trees on a smaller plot of land more quickly." Do you know what's going to happen? I'm going to predict it here today. Five or six years down the road we're going to have the environmentalists packing up their backpacks, moving back up to northern Ontario and protesting the activities of logging companies because bad logging practices will be allowed to happen to sustain the yield they need to cut on the lesser amount of land they've been given.

The forest companies think they bought themselves a good deal here. I think this is the worst thing they could have done, because we had finally set aside that whole issue by way of the Crown Forest Sustainability Act that Howard Hampton brought in when he was Minister of Natural Resources. The forest companies, the outfitters, the logging operators agreed to it. Everybody was on side and the thing was working. We had gone to best-possible-use practices and we had gone to a sustainable forestry development plan.

Now you guys have thrown that out the window. So I say the environmentalists won this one. It wasn't the government. The environmentalists are happy because they recognize that five or six years down the road they are going to be able to push up the stakes on what's going on in the forest industry in northern Ontario. It's the people in my community who are going to pay for your stupidity. That's the part that bugs me.

It's going to take another government to come behind you to try to fix it. We're going to be into another shlemozzle, because if we're elected as government we're going to have to try to figure out a way to move back to some sort of mechanism that allows best possible use in a sustainable forestry plan when it comes to harvesting. We're going to have to go back through a fight with the environmental community because of what you

tried to do to have political gains with the environmental community of southern Ontario.

Let me tell you something: The environmentalists aren't going to vote for you anyway. They're not going to. They hate you. They don't trust you. They don't like your environmental record. What have you gained? Absolutely nothing. You've hurt northern Ontario.

What do you think that's going to do for your candidates in the north? I don't think it's going to do a lot. You guys should have known better. You're supposedly the party of business. If you guys are such bright businessmen, how come you didn't look past the election of 1999? You should have been looking at what this means to the northern economy for years to come.

On the other hand, we've got the other part of our northern economy, which is the mining industry. They say: "We've fixed the problem. We've allowed explorers to go into parks and explore in parks and this is going to fix everything."

2040

I don't know what you guys are drinking, I don't know what you guys are up to, but you haven't figured it out. Two problems with that: One, from the environmentalist perspective it's a problem because any time a potential mine is found in a park you've now newly created, we're going to have environmentalists coming back up north saying, "Don't develop this mine in this park because there's an old tree there that has to be protected. His name is Mike Harris," or something. They're going to be up there protesting the development of the mine.

What do you think that's going to do to the people who want to invest in northern exploration, in the minerals industry? It means they're not going to invest in the north, and we're seeing it. In Timmins alone, which is the mining centre of Ontario, we are seeing the exploration industry moving out in droves. I was talking to a number of geologists the other day. As a matter of fact, Bob Calhoun, who is the president of the PPDA, said to me point-blank: "Gilles, I want to tell you something. When you see geologists walking down Third Avenue in Timmins and they introduce themselves as mining consultants, it means they're unemployed geologists."

There are all kinds of mining consultants in my community now because a lot of them are out of work. The majors have shut down their exploration outfits in Timmins. They have moved out. There's hardly an exploration office left as far as the majors are concerned — a little bit with Falconbridge and that's about it. When it comes to the smaller ones in the exploration industry, there's hardly anything left.

What you have done, the supposedly bright business people of Ontario, the business party of Ontario, is you have gone in and you've created uncertainty in the mining sector and we're going to see yet again a reduction in investment for the exploration community in northern Ontario.

What does that mean? It means that people in my community are going to have a hard time trying to find

work because once you start operating a mine, that mine depletes and you have to have another one to replace it.

I propose that what we should be doing and what I will work at doing, if we're elected as a government or even if we come back in opposition or if this thing is a coalition afterwards as far as a minority Parliament is concerned, is to bring back incentive programs for northern Ontario to assist the mining sector to be able to do its job. Take a look at some of the programs that are going on in Manitoba and Quebec where the governments are active participants in the exploration industry.

Quebec, for example, has a program to assist with the cost of drilling more than 400 metres down. It's very expensive to do, so they help the industry to offset some of those costs. They have an addition to the flow-through share. In Quebec you can get a flow-through share by way of a federal tax credit at 100% and then the provincial government tops it up to 166% in total. Here in Ontario you get the 100% and that's it.

Most Tories will say, "That's good, it's 100%." The point is, if I'm a person who is going to invest money in the exploration industry and I can get a 166% write-off in taxes both by way of the province of Quebec and the federal government and I can only get 100% in Ontario, where do you think I'm going to invest?

What you guys have done by way of this Lands for Life is basically turned the industry to a point where I think it's going to be even worse than what we've seen in the 1990s, as well as other actions you have taken.

I'm going to say this. There are a number of people in my community I have a lot of respect for who are in the small business community. A lot of those people traditionally have voted Conservative because they understand the Conservative Party supposedly is the party of business and New Democrats are supposedly the party of the working person. They say, "Gilles, in the past I've never voted NDP because I see the Conservatives as the party of business."

They are starting to figure out you're the worst darn thing for small business that ever came around. You guys have done more to discourage investment in northern Ontario in the last four years you've been here than I think anything that has ever happened in the past in Ontario. Oh yes, we'll hear in about a minute and 51 seconds government members get up with their mantra and talk about the wonderful job they're doing. Let me invite you to northern Ontario. I want you to talk to the unemployed and I want you to talk to the underemployed and I want you to find out just how easy it is to find jobs in northern Ontario, given the policies your government has put in place.

I was at Northern College not more than two weeks ago, where I had a session of three periods with a class that was graduating for that school year in a particular program. It was really interesting. There were 40 people there and I said, "How many of you here are over the age of 30?" All but two people put up their hands. I said, "How many of you here have been to college before and are working on your second college degree?" About half

of the class put up their hands. I said, "How many of you have got work for the summer to help you pay your way back here next year?" Hardly anyone put up their hand. I think that's pretty telling.

I say to the government members on the opposite side, you have been a great disappointment when it comes to what has happened in the northern part of the province. I also predict that the south will soon start to figure it out, because the southern Ontario economy has benefited by what has been happening in the economy in the United States, south of us. The reality is we trade more with the United States than we do with anybody else, so when they're doing well, we do well. Our GDP was higher in 1993 than the United States and it was higher in 1994.

Interjection.

Mr Bisson: I understand that, but the point I make is that once the economy of the US goes down, southern Ontario will start to figure out just how bad this government has done by way of people and the effect it's going to have on their lives. You better hope that doesn't happen before the next election because you're gone. That's for sure.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): It's quite entertaining listening to the member for Cochrane South and his diatribe on some of the problems that he refers to as problems during the last four years. He must be forgetting that during his five-year term when they were in government, they lost a net 10,000 jobs here in Ontario. In the last four years or three and a half years, we've gone ahead 5,400 net new jobs. I think he's forgetting that kind of thing.

He's probably also forgetting that during their five years in government they doubled the debt, a crippling debt. The deficit ran at an unprecedented level, up to \$15 billion, \$17 billion in a given year. They operated with two sets of books. I don't know whether they were trying to confuse the public, but I'm sure the member for Cochrane South will remember how they ran with two sets of books. Then they took \$60 million out of the heritage fund that was really designated for the north.

Maybe, just maybe, in his response in a few minutes he could explain to us why they sat for only I believe it was 25 days in the last 15 months. There was so much to be done in Ontario, and they didn't even bother to call the Legislature back.

I think the member for Cochrane South is forgetting about all the roads, the infrastructure that has been built in the north during our term in office. They are forgetting about the roads and the water and the sewers that have been put in in so many of the communities he has been referring to.

Small business is where it's at. This government has reduced taxes and it has got rid of the red tape so that jobs can be created in small business. I think if he really looked at it, he'd see that in the north as well.

Mr Crozier: Just a quick aside. The member for Northumberland shouldn't talk about not calling the Legislature back, because this government took an extra

month to call us back this spring. With the litany of bills that was introduced today and the way the government says it has so much to do, I don't think people in glass houses should throw stones.

I think the member for Cochrane South makes a great deal of sense when he talks about the spring bear hunt. I have certainly said to my constituents that I am not a hunter but that does not mean that those of us in the most southerly ridings in Ontario should not try and understand how important this is to the north.

I spoke with an outfitter, a camp owner, just this week who sent a fax to me and asked me to call so that it could be explained to me what it really means to them. It echoed very much what the member for Cochrane North has said this evening.

Mr Bisson: South.

Mr Crozier: Cochrane South. You noticed I was trying to quickly look down, but from Cochrane South. The fact is you're a lot further north than I am.

Those of us in southern Ontario have to understand this. It's unfortunate that, as the member pointed out, the Premier, literally on the back of a matchbook, would write policy and announce policy that's so important to the north. This government says, "We don't listen to interest groups." They seem to be quite proud of that. It seems to me that you listened to some interest groups that may have given you some bad advice, and I think we should listen carefully to what the member says and the way he explains the problem in the north.

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The Deputy Speaker: The member for Cochrane South has two minutes to respond.

Mr Bisson: Thank you very much, both to the member for Essex-Kent and the member for Northumberland.

Mr Crozier: Essex South.

Mr Bisson: Essex South.

Mr Crozier: I deserve that.

Mr Bisson: What goes around comes around. I'm sorry I didn't get your riding right. I want to thank you both for your comments.

The member for Northumberland talks about how he wishes I would remember what our record was in northern Ontario when we were government. I would stack the record of the NDP in government in northern Ontario against yours any day. Come to my riding and we'll have that debate. When Spruce Falls was pulling out of Kapuskasing, we were the government that said, "We're going to save that town," and we moved on worker ownership, when Mike Harris was saying, "Don't do it," when Brian Mulroney in Ottawa said, "Don't do it." We're the government that went in with Algoma Steel, Algoma Central, St Marys Paper, Thunder Bay Abitibi, Sturgeon Falls and others and saved entire communities by working with them in order to find solutions for northern Ontarians. So I will put in place our record any day, any time, at your choosing, when it comes to what happens in northern Ontario. You guys have nothing to talk about when it comes to that.

I want to say again to the members across the way on the Conservative side, you say your mantra so often that you begin to believe it. But let me tell you, you can say it as much as you want, people aren't going to buy it and here's my little proof. You guys went out and spent I don't know how many millions of dollars in the last couple of months to advertise your message on radio and television.

Mr Bob Wood (London South): Less than you did.

Mr Bisson: We can't afford to advertise the way you guys do. But my point is this: You've spent more money on television and radio in the last couple of months, taxpayers' dollars, to advertise the message of how well you've done in education and health care over the last few years and you dropped 12 points in the polls. That's how convincing your message has been. I'm telling you, people aren't going to buy it next election.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Galt: It's certainly a pleasure for me to be able to respond to the throne speech, certainly a speech that was an exceptional one delivered by the Lieutenant Governor. I think the big overriding message of that throne speech was indeed that the government is on track and it's on track with the proper game plan for Ontario.

I'd like to give you a quote from the baseball great Yogi Berra. He said, "If you don't know where you're going, you won't know when you get there." There's an awful lot of truth in that statement. This government put out a plan a good year ahead of the election, and that plan was the result of a lot of consultation, extensive consultation, across this great province. As a result, we came out with a plan and had a vision and that was the link to reality, where we are today, taking the province of Ontario from being really in last place with the economy in this great nation of Canada to being in first place. That wasn't any coincidence; that was from some very, very hard work.

The throne speech has reaffirmed many things that are really happening here in Ontario, first that high taxes kill jobs. I think there's hardly anyone left in the province today who would argue with that. Also, they recognize that as you lower taxes, you create jobs, so one goes one way and the other goes the other. High taxes kill jobs; lower taxes create jobs.

One of the other points that was reaffirmed in the throne speech was the fact that you need a strong economy if you're going to end up having a strong health care program, if you're going to have the quality of education, if you're going to have social programs in general. You must have that strong economy or you just do not have the resources to be able to provide for these kinds of programs.

The throne speech also reaffirmed that like best practices for for-profit companies which revel in the culture of change, it also works in government, particularly with health care, with social assistance and with education.

During my presentation I want to zero in on two areas in particular in that throne speech, one relating to the economy and the other one relating more to the Charter

of Education Rights and Responsibilities. There is no question in my mind that Ontario is clearly going ahead. We definitely were going backwards in the early 1990s, no question. In spite of what the member for Cochrane South was saying about the north and how things do or do not evolve there, in the first five years in this province we fell behind some 10,000 jobs; in the last slightly less than four years we have gone ahead 540,000 net new jobs. That is the kind of solid growth in the economy that has been happening in this province.

We've also been seeing a very significant decline in the welfare rate. Probably it's declining at a rate very similar to the opposite, the increase that happened back in the late 1980s and into the early 1990s. There's a similar story in my riding of Northumberland; the boundaries of my riding have been coterminous with the boundaries of the county. Right now, unemployment is down to 4.7%. The welfare is down.

Recently I had the opportunity, on my cable show, to do an interview with the acting director, Wendy Whyte. She was so enthusiastically supporting our program, having over 1,200 people off social assistance in the county of Northumberland. That translates into a saving of over \$10 million, \$2 million for the county and \$8 million for the province.

But those are just the hard, cold facts and dollars. There's also the saving for the people who were caught in this dependency on welfare and now have been able to break free and become a contributing member of society and get paid employment.

The local economy is certainly on the increase. The number on welfare is down and the dependency on food banks also in a similar way has been reduced, many thanks to the local food banks in their efforts to reduce some of the fraudulent withdrawals that had been occurring and also thanks to the increase in the number of jobs out in the marketplace. As a result, the Fair Share Food Bank of Northumberland had 37,000 fewer withdrawals in 1998 than they did in the previous year of 1997.

Certainly there is an increase in employment numbers in our area, and that goes along with the increase of investment. This includes new businesses, retail outlets, housing developments, construction projects. As a matter of fact, I had the good fortune to attend two home shows this past weekend, one in Campbellford and one in the Trenton ward of Quinte West; it used to be the city of Trenton. It didn't matter who I stopped and talked to about the economy, particularly those in the real estate business: They just bubbled with enthusiasm about the sales and where the economy of the province is presently going. They could see nothing but great things for their company into the future.

Talking to some of them, they were saying, "This year is make or break for us," and with what's going on in the province, where it's really booming along and in some cases people are running out of supplies — one individual who, as a matter of fact, used to work in my office is up in Pefferlaw packaging peat products, and he's out of

products. There has been that kind of demand in the marketplace and things are really happening.

Government policies are certainly critical to encourage growth in this province. The reduction of taxes has been one leg of the stool, another has been getting rid of the red tape, and the other has been the confidence in government, the confidence in the economy. That's created a new kind of atmosphere for people in business in this province, certainly a very dramatic change from what was going on back in the early 1990s where growth was really at a standstill. You looked around and there were no help wanted ads.

Just recently, chatting with the executive of the school bus operators, they were indicating to me how difficult it is for them to find people now to drive school buses because there are so many other jobs out there for people. Rather than a part-time job driving a school bus, they're now able to get a full-time job. They were enthused about what was happening to the economy but were indicating that it's creating a problem for them to get staff to regularly drive those school buses.

You might say that Northumberland is like a microcosm of the province, and certainly it's good news with the economy that's going on both in Northumberland county as well as across the province.

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The other aspect that came out in the throne speech that I would like to address relates to the education charter of rights and responsibilities. It was actually announced a little ahead of the throne speech. To continue with the same baseball analogy, yesterday's home runs won't win tomorrow's ball game, and the education charter in my view is a home run for the future, for the government, for parents, for students and also for the taxpayers. For far too long in our educational system excellence has been going unrewarded and poor performance has been going unchallenged, and that just hasn't been right. It has been a monopoly and you can understand why that kind of thing would occur within a monopoly. We need to bring other aspects into education to ensure that quality will be there.

This charter of education will help to identify schools that need help, to identify students who need help. It's even suggesting in there that we might give bonuses to top teachers. We can work with the College of Teachers, with universities and also with teachers and further develop this particular concept.

With this charter, there is absolutely no question that there will be greater transparency and increased accountability in our educational system. With a charter such as this, parents will have the information to be able to better evaluate their children's progress and to better evaluate the school and compare academic results. In the past it has been extremely difficult to read a report card and really understand what your child has been accomplishing at school. When my children were in elementary school back in the 1970s, it was very difficult to read those report cards and have any idea of whether they were a top student or whether they were down near the

bottom, and that just isn't right. Parents should be able to understand that.

A year and a half ago we lobbied very hard with the local board of education to release the school-by-school results. They absolutely refused. My staff did a lot of phoning from school to school to school to get those results so we could put them together. We did that because parents were asking us, "Why can't we see the results of the various schools?" With this charter, that is coming forward. At that time and for some time afterwards, I lobbied the Minister of Education that these kind of school-by-school results be available and that it be a requirement of boards of education to produce those.

Parents will now have a clearer picture of what really is going on. They will be able to compare the school results and identify educational practices that produce results. There will be the opportunity to have that information-sharing within the school board so that they can compare the good schools and what's making them a good school and use that information for the schools that are not coming up to the full standard. Schools that are not meeting those standards will of course be required to develop and implement a turnaround plan and work with the school council. The school council is going to be a tremendous support to the principal and to the teachers in these schools. Certainly the people who are going to benefit from this will be the students.

The student is the centre of the hub in the educational system. For far too long we've thought of the centre of the hub as a teacher or the principal or the school, but in fact the student is the centre of the hub and the teachers and the schools and the taxpayers all are supporting and feeding in.

It was interesting to note in this charter the announcement that down the road we will be doing regular teacher testing. It met with the kind of response I certainly expected. There was opposition from the unions, and because of this opposition and it looks like there's a bit of a struggle, it appears on the front page of the paper.

Well, many occupations go through periodic recertification. Take the nursing profession, for example. With their CPR and with intensive care, they have to be regularly recertified. Real estate people are regularly recertified in law. As a matter of fact, even politicians have to be periodically recertified, and we probably have that certification experience coming up, as the Premier says, within the next 14 months or so. Some of us will get recertified, some will become certified and of course there will be some who will lose the certification of being an MPP. With these occupations like educators it is necessary to update the knowledge and ensure they have the current skills so that our students will be at the top of the class.

Our own local school board, the Kawartha Pine Ridge board of education, indicated in the press that they support this idea, but it's interesting that the director of education, Dick Malowney, claims it does nothing to attract teachers. I find that statement rather confusing. I really don't understand it. Is he saying to us that teachers

don't want to be held accountable? I really don't think so. I don't think that's what's being said, but it certainly sounds like it. This concept is unheard of in the private sector because in the private sector performance is absolutely everything.

It's also saying, as a director —

The Deputy Speaker: Order. There's too loud a conversation going on. You'll either have to pipe down or I'll have to move it somewhere else.

Sorry to interrupt the speaker from Northumberland, and I recognize you again.

Mr Galt: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for bringing order in the House.

He's also saying that the teachers are being threatened by summer school and that that's a shot at the profession, and that's certainly wrong. The numbers speak for themselves. Applications to teachers' colleges have gone up over 40%. Good teachers, I believe, will welcome the opportunity to upgrade their skills and be assured they're on the leading edge in a rapidly changing world. I think they will also recognize that this is a good profession, an important profession. Some say it's a real privilege to be a teacher, and they're also well rewarded, with the experienced teachers averaging some \$57,000 in the province.

I believe the Charter of Education Rights and Responsibilities will enhance the profession and ensure the same standards of performance are there for all teachers.

Indeed, our plan is working. There's new life in the Ontario economy and it's been brought there by the tax cuts, by sound financial planning and by the reduction in the size and cost of government. Consumer and investor confidence is back in the province. All you have to do is go to one of the shopping malls in any of our cities and you'll find that once again those shopping malls are filled. The parking lots are filled with cars and the mall is filled with people and there are very few, if any, spaces left in those shopping malls.

As a matter of fact, I'm sure many members, if not all the members, here have experienced going out and looking for a campaign office or a committee room and finding that all the stores in their village or in their town are filled with active retail stores and there's just no space left to set up a campaign office. If you look around you see that real estate sales are up and car sales are up, all indicators of an improved quality of life here in the province.

We as a government have taken some risk to do some innovative things in reforming health care and in reforming education, but we're now reaping those rewards and will continue to reap those rewards in the future. A strong economy is the first prerequisite to a strong health care system and to the quality education we need in this country if we're going to continue to lead and stay on top and be the engine that drives Ontario.

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No other government has had the courage to make the difficult decisions, the very necessary decisions this government has made here in Ontario. This government has had the intestinal fortitude to say no to those who were

prepared to bleed the public purse for their own gain. We have put policies in place to assure that taxes will stay down and that we will get rid of as much of the red tape as possible and that it will stay out of the system here in the province.

Ontario is on the right track. I think and predict that as we move into this next election, the people of Ontario will recognize where we've been. They don't want to go back to 1995. They don't want to go back to 1990 or the 1980s, to 1985-87 when we had an unholy alliance between the NDP and the Liberals. We know where that took us and they certainly don't want to go back there again. They recognize and will reward the Harris government for setting the new standards of accountability in this province. We have indeed been doing what we said we'd do.

I am very much looking forward to going out and campaigning and meeting with the voters. I already have been doing a fair amount of it. I am looking forward to this campaign. I believe the voters will respond and reaffirm what the majority of Ontarians have been telling us all along: that we are on the right track and full steam ahead to keep Ontario going with the economy we've had over the last three and a half to four years.

The Deputy Speaker: Questions and comments? No? Further debate?

Mrs Papatello: Mr Speaker, permission to split my time, unanimous consent to split my time.

The Deputy Speaker: Unanimous consent for the member for Windsor-Sandwich to split her time with the member for Essex South? It is agreed.

Mrs Papatello : I am happy to speak briefly on the throne speech and give our response, the Ontario Liberal Party position, on what we heard or rather did not hear in the throne speech last week by the Lieutenant Governor speaking on behalf of the government.

It was of great interest to the people of Windsor-Sandwich, soon to be the riding of Windsor West, that eleven pages into the throne speech suddenly there was the mere mention of health care. While the members opposite have been speaking this evening about what remains the number one priority in the minds of Ontarians, there's no question that issue is the health care issue. What we've seen over the course of the last several months in this \$100 million propaganda ad campaign paid for by the taxpayers and brought to you by Premier Mike Harris is that even that has not been able to convince the taxpayers of Ontario that this government has done right by us in the area of health care or in the area of education.

What we heard in the throne speech instead was more chatter about teacher testing and what you're going to do to make the system better. Over the last several months, when all of us have been home in our ridings, we've been talking to people to see what they think about their Ontario government. I've talked to parents who have children in the classroom, young children in the classroom, who are now asking the tough questions. They're saying: "What is going on? I have a grade 1 daughter at

home who is bringing home two hours of homework a night." One mother said to me: "If my daughter comes home at four o'clock, we'll take a couple of hours between having dinner and bathing and getting her to bed by eight. The remaining time is spent with this ongoing workbook of work because she has a teacher who is so concerned about not getting through the various new units that have appeared in that grade 1 level in elementary school that this child has no time to just be a child." This mother is very concerned. When she goes to her PTA meeting, her school councils are having those discussions with teachers to say, "What is going on?"

If we go further up in the elementary grades, like grade 9, grade 10, even grade 7 and 8, where are the new textbooks? We are talking about the very basic requirements in an education system that children would have the textbooks they need, that teachers would have appropriate materials to teach the right kind of curriculum.

This government has been on a mission. It hasn't been a mission to improve education but just to allow the movement of the private education system in Ontario to flourish, which it has. One of the fastest growing industries today in Ontario is the whole tutoring industry. Children are not getting everything they need because this government walked in in 1995 and began cutting the public education system, not through any methodical process or with even a process in mind that would leave it accountable for the results that would ensue, but just blaming school boards because school boards now, under this new funding formula, cannot provide the very basic requirements in the classroom. That is what we are now hearing at the door: parents who are very concerned about what they see as deficiencies in the classroom, the same classroom that this Premier promised he would not take one cent from.

That is the same kind of promise that he made on a Robert Fisher broadcast: "It is not my plan to close hospitals." Four years later we are looking at 35 hospitals closing.

In my own community, people are amazed at the lack of health care that we are still suffering from. Now we read all of the major newspapers in Ontario and see that the rest of Ontario is catching up with where Windsor has been for some time. We have longer waits for treatment for very basic cancer care, emergency room waits that are absolutely unacceptable, surgery being delayed, people who cannot access a bed. Today we heard about the individual who had a double mastectomy, and this woman in Thunder Bay did not have a bed to return to in a Thunder Bay hospital. That is becoming a regular occurrence across Ontario.

So while the ads are playing in their living rooms, these individuals are saying what John Wright wrapped up in his analysis that appeared in the *Globe and Mail* over the weekend. What he said was, "A month after polls showed that 73% of the Ontario electorate was worried about medicare, Mr Harris and his ministers threw close to \$1 billion at a succession of health care problems that suddenly loomed as a crisis." "Suddenly

loomed as a crisis"? We have been telling you day after day in this House about issues in health care. You could have responded, but you wait until the eve of an election to start making your announcements.

This from the same government that said it wasn't about the money. You said it was about management. Your management style is what has failed Ontarians today in health care. It is this same management style that is going to be put to the test during the next general election, when we will tell the people that if it isn't about the money and if it is about management, then this government has failed miserably.

It doesn't matter what part of Ontario you live in, you have suffered at the hands of cuts to a health care system that means, in my community, Mrs Alice Siddall, who died because home care was not provided adequately and she didn't have the kind of pain relief — at 91 years of age, to have paid into a system all her life and to not have it respond for her when she needed it, that is going to be the legacy of the Mike Harris government. That is what the people in Windsor West are going to remember.

They'll also remember a Dalton McGuinty promise going into this election: the 20/20 Plan, a clear vision for Ontario that will take us, in particular in the areas of health care and education, not just through an election but through the new millennium into the year 2020 with a direct commitment for increased spending in health and education to shore up all of the areas that are so severely lacking today in Ontario. That is the Dalton McGuinty government and that's what we hope to bring to you after the next general election.

M. Lalonde : Il me fait grandement plaisir de soulever un point où on a fait passage très brièvement dans le discours du trône lorsque nous avons référé au problème de la construction Québec-Ontario. Nous savons que c'est un problème qui existe depuis au-delà de 30 ans ici-même en Ontario. Mais la chose qui me surprend beaucoup, c'est que même le premier ministre, dans un discours à la Chambre le 27 septembre 1993, a bel et bien dit qu'il avait été élu en 1981 et que le problème existait depuis 1981. Aussi il faudrait se rappeler que le 20 juin 1996, nous avons passé dans cette Chambre à l'unanimité le projet de loi 60, où tous les trois partis ont accepté avec joie que l'on procède immédiatement avec ce projet de loi pour essayer de modifier le problème qui existe dans la construction depuis au-delà de 30 ans.

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Je m'aperçois qu'aujourd'hui-même, on était censé de déposer en première lecture le projet de loi pour essayer de finir une fois pour toutes avec ce problème qui existe dans le domaine de la construction. Nous savons bel et bien qu'en Ontario, le domaine de la construction est une industrie majeure. Lorsque la construction ne fonctionne pas en Ontario, l'économie descend très bas. On dit toujours que les deux domaines qui font fonctionner l'économie en Ontario, ce sont l'industrie de l'auto et l'industrie de la construction. Mais pourquoi notre premier ministre n'a-t-il pas agi le 20 juin 1996, lorsque nous avons passé, en deuxième lecture, encore une fois à

l'unanimité, que l'on procède immédiatement pour mettre un arrêt à la discrimination qui existe chez nous en Ontario avec nos travailleurs de la construction ?

Je voyais tout à l'heure que dans une partie du discours on disait que nous avions réduit le nombre de personnes qui bénéficient du bien-être social par 374 000 personnes. Je crois que ce n'est pas exact. Je ne pourrais pas dire qu'on ne raconte pas la vérité, parce que je n'ai pas le droit de le dire, mais ce n'est pas exact. Si nous avons mis en place le projet de loi 60 en 1996, nous aurions réduit le nombre sans emploi en Ontario par au-delà de 13 000. Nous savons que même si le ministre dit toujours que nous avons au-delà de 6 000 travailleurs dans la construction qui traversent les lignes, qu'on pourrait dire, qui longent la rivière plutôt, qui viennent du Québec pour travailler en Ontario, je crois que là aussi on se trompe. Je me rappelle que le 9 octobre 1996, la ministre du temps, M^{me} Witmer, avait dit qu'il y avait 3 000 travailleurs de la construction du Québec qui venaient travailler en Ontario. Dans une rencontre immédiatement après, je lui ai dit : «Madame la ministre, je crois que vous vous trompez. C'est 3 000 syndiqués qui traversent en Ontario. Nous avons oublié les 13 000 autres travailleurs de la construction qui ne sont pas syndiqués.»

Le problème n'existe pas seulement dans la région d'Ottawa-Nepean-Kanata-Hawkesbury-Rockland ; il existe beaucoup dans les secteurs de Hearst, Kapuskasing et Cornwall. Même à un certain temps, il y avait au-delà de 2 000 travailleurs de la construction qui travaillaient dans la région de Windsor, mais on s'est aperçu que les gens sont prêts à voyager 500 milles pour aller travailler. Ce sont des personnes compétentes, qu'on pourrait dire, mais la majorité d'entre eux ne peuvent pas obtenir leur carte de compétence de la province de Québec, donc ils doivent venir gagner leur vie en Ontario.

Nous savons que tout récemment, on a procédé à bloquer tous les ponts dans la région de Hull-Ottawa, et même de Hawkesbury. Cela a certainement mis une pression sur le gouvernement Bouchard, mais maintenant c'est à nous de prendre en main le domaine où on sait que le problème existe depuis au moins 30 ans. Comme j'ai dit tout à l'heure, le premier ministre savait que le problème existait en 1981. Pourquoi a-t-il attendu si longtemps ? Pourquoi avons-nous perdu trois ans et demi de construction pour nos travailleurs de la construction de l'Ontario ?

Je sais que dans la région d'Ottawa-Carleton, la majorité — on parle de 80 % à 90 % — des travailleurs de la construction dans le domaine résidentiel sont des travailleurs du Québec, mais rien n'a été fait. Tout d'un coup les élections s'en viennent dans quelques jours, dans quelques mois — on ne sait pas ; seulement le premier ministre le sait — mais nous avons pu comprendre que c'était un projet de loi qui était très, très important et qui pourrait peut-être l'aider dans les élections.

Mais laissez-moi vous dire que le premier ministre a peut-être agi un peu trop tard dans ce domaine et que les gens se rappelleront toujours que c'est Jean-Marc

Lalonde lui-même qui a déposé en Chambre en 1996 un projet de loi afin d'arrêter la discrimination qui existe dans cette province depuis de nombreuses années, que nous perdons au-delà de 13 000 emplois par année ici en Ontario, que ce sont les travailleurs de la construction du Québec qui viennent travailler en Ontario parce qu'ils ne peuvent pas travailler au Québec et nous, pendant ce temps, ne pouvons pas aller travailler au Québec. Donc, il est grandement temps que le premier ministre et le ministre du Travail, l'honorable M. Flaherty, disent : «C'est assez. Nous voulons maintenant donner une chance à nos travailleurs de la construction de l'Ontario.» Même après l'annonce du 31 mars du premier ministre qui est venu à Navan, il a dit qu'à compter du 1^{er} avril 1999, aucune firme du Québec, aucune compagnie de construction du Québec, sera invitée à soumettre un prix pour la construction en Ontario. Qu'est-ce qui est arrivé le 8 avril passé ? Exactement huit jours après l'annonce qu'il a fait à Navan, nous avons procédé avec la vente de la route 407 à deux firmes de Montréal, deux firmes du Québec qui, eux, disent qu'ils vont créer 6000 emplois. De quel endroit pensez-vous que les emplois vont venir ? Certainement du Québec, c'est des firmes du Québec que nous avons engagées.

Le lendemain matin le Globe and Mail disait que ça va au contraire de ce que le premier ministre a annoncé le 31 mars. Il avait dit : «Fin, c'est fini. Ils ne veulent pas coopérer avec nous autres. On n'invite plus les compagnies du Québec à venir soumettre des prix pour la construction en l'Ontario.» Ça veut dire que ce qu'on a annoncé le 31 mars, ça ne tient pas bien debout. Aujourd'hui, on veut lancer des relations publiques avec ce projet de loi, mais si nous avons l'intention de revenir en Chambre avec ce projet de loi, j'espère que nous allons revenir cette semaine et passer les première,

deuxième et troisième lectures la même journée. Nous sommes prêts à supporter le projet de loi afin de donner la chance à nos travailleurs de la construction de l'Ontario qui puissent retourner au travail. Ça fait assez longtemps que ces personnes-là, des personnes compétentes de l'Ontario, ne peuvent pas travailler sur la construction parce que les emplois sont tenus par des employeurs et aussi des employés du Québec.

Dans mes recherches en 1996, j'ai trouvé que le bureau des accidents du travail de l'Ontario avait payé à des employés du Québec avec des adresses au Québec au-delà de 50 417 000 \$ de prestations, à des résidents du Québec. Pensez-vous que nous, en Ontario, on doit suivre les règles ? Nous, en Ontario, avons la construction numéro un. Nous avons des inspecteurs de la construction. Mais avec le gouvernement Harris, nous avons éliminé un nombre d'emplois d'inspecteurs de santé et de sécurité. Donc, c'est pour ça — on ne gagne pas du tout en ayant coupé ces emplois-là. On doit les payer en retour, à des prestations d'accidents du travail.

Je crois que l'heure est arrivée pour moi de terminer, et je crois que j'aurai la chance de continuer demain, parce que j'ai beaucoup à dire dans le domaine de la construction, puisque je travaille dans le domaine dans ce projet de loi depuis maintenant le mois de juin 1996. Encore une fois, espérons que le gouvernement Harris va mettre ses culottes et qu'il va dire : «Assez, c'est assez, nous allons maintenant passer le projet de loi, et puis nous allons reconnaître aussi l'honnêteté de nos travailleurs de la construction.»

Merci.

The Deputy Speaker: It being 9:30, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 o'clock tomorrow.

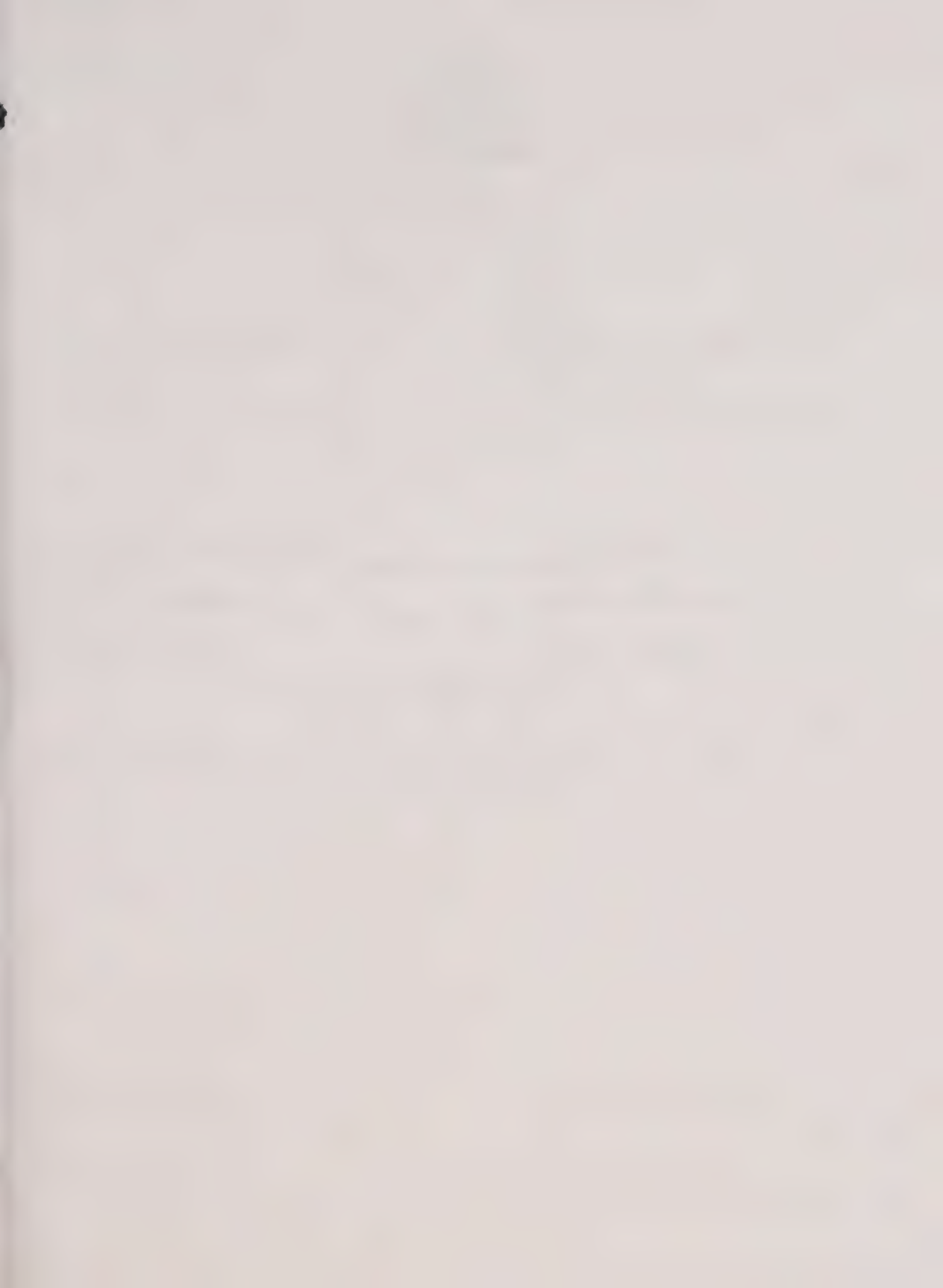
The House adjourned at 2130.

ERRATUM

No.	Page	Column	Line(s)
41A	2370	2	27-28

Should read:

Franta Bass, born in 1930 and deported to Terezin in 1942. She was murdered at Auschwitz in 1944. She left a



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Government
Publications



No. 3A

N° 3A

ISSN 1180-2987

**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

Third Session, 36th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 36^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Tuesday 27 April 1999

Mardi 27 avril 1999

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 27 April 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 27 avril 1999

*The House met at 1331.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

NORTHERN HEALTH TRAVEL GRANTS

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): Premier Harris actually made an important statement of principle here yesterday. He said that health care should be made available to all citizens on an equal basis.

He's right. The problem is that he says that but he does nothing about it. This Premier has done nothing and will do nothing to make sure that people in northern Ontario are getting equal treatment when it comes to health care. In fact, it's just the opposite. Instead of equal treatment, Mike Harris has given northerners a slap in the face.

People in my community are outraged that the Ministry of Health, without a moment's hesitation, offered to cover all transportation, accommodation and even meal costs for people who have to travel to northern Ontario for health care. What angers people in my community is that the government will not do the same thing for northerners.

Mike Harris knows that northerners often have to travel to receive health care that's not available in their home communities. Mike Harris knows that the maximum \$420 that the northern health travel grant provides covers only a small portion of the cost of travel. I have constituents who are spending thousands of dollars of their own money to get medically necessary care, like the case of Mr Allan Rawlyk that we've raised in this Legislature, who has spent over \$10,000 of his own money to get the care he needs.

Mike Harris talks about equal access to health care for northerners, but what we have now is two-tiered health care: publicly supported if you live in the south, personally supported out of pocket for people who live in the north. Northerners won't accept second-class-citizen treatment.

ADOPTION

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I'm really dismayed by the introduction again yesterday of the Child and Family Services Act by the Minister of Community and Social Services.

I'm happy that it's coming forward again, but I have to say to you that the adoption community is extremely disappointed that once again they have been left out. Early in this government's mandate the minister promised the adoption community that if changes were made to the Child and Family Services Act, adoption disclosure reform would be part of those changes. The minister didn't move on that.

My colleague Alex Cullen came forward with a bill. I came forward with Bill 88, a private member's bill, towards the end of last session. As you know, the majority of this House, including all but three of the Tory caucus in the House that day, supported moving forward on adoption disclosure reform.

There are a million people affected by these old, outdated laws in this land, in this Ontario of ours, who are suffering unnecessarily because of outdated disclosure laws. This government had an opportunity to make a difference, to use this power and make sure that bill went through or that it was included in the new act. They have done none of that, and we are very disappointed that has not happened.

ROCKTON LIONS CLUB TREE DEDICATION PROGRAM

Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North): On a positive note, I would like to talk about the Rockton Lions Club tree planting program.

This program started at the Beverly Community Centre in 1977. It started as a way to acknowledge the service rendered to the community by two of the club's deceased members, Hugh Hunter and John Howell. It was agreed that planting trees at the community centre would be a fitting living memorial commemorating their many years of community service. It wasn't long before word got out and other residents expressed an interest to participate in this venture. About 50 trees were planted that first year.

The Rockton Lions Club's tree dedication program continued in 1982, 1986 and 1993, resulting in many more trees being planted. This program evolved to include dedications for families and friends of the organization as well as members who had passed on. The program now may include dedications for living family members.

On this coming Sunday, May 2, 1999, at the Beverly Community Centre, the Rockton Lions Club will honour those who have served their community at this year's tree

dedication ceremony. This year's honourees include past presidents of the Rockton Lions Club, Don Smith and Carl Jones; Archie McCoy, who contributed greatly to the building of the Beverly Community Centre and who is recently deceased; Gil Powers, who served as the district governor to district A11; and members of the Rockton Lions Club: Mel Kenney, Tom Drawbell and George Schohman.

Over the years, the trees have grown and flourished, a quiet testimonial to Lions Club members and area residents who have all served their community well.

MUNICIPAL RESTRUCTURING

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): Just last weekend, S-D-G & East Grenville MPP Noble Villeneuve came to my riding and announced that the government would finally pay for cleaning up the mess they created in transferring provincial responsibilities on to municipalities.

However, while juggling with pre-election cheques, the member for S-D-G & East Grenville neglected to restore the funding for the municipality in his own riding, the township of South Dundas. It seems Mr Noble Villeneuve's election goodies excluded South Dundas from the rest of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry.

Mayor Johnny Whitteker and his council want to know why they've been ignored. Where were their election goodies? Taxpayers and municipal officials in my area know that over the past three years the provincial government has been taking away from them and at the same time increasing local responsibilities.

They also know that the money is coming now because of the election. But it's here today and gone tomorrow, and we know that next year the election will be over and the municipalities will be deeper and deeper in the hole.

The government promised that the downloading scheme would be revenue-neutral. This is another broken promise from Mike Harris. The government is now simply trying to buy back voter support on pre-election cheque presentations and photo ops.

HOMELESSNESS

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): I rise today with a report in hand named Homelessness in Ottawa-Carleton. This report was tabled at the regional council in Ottawa-Carleton, and all policy-makers concerned about homelessness should be paying attention.

This report shows us that we have 5,000 people, 900 of whom are children — not street kids but children — on the streets, in the shelters every year in Ottawa-Carleton. It also shows us that we have 75,000 families paying more than 30% of their incomes on shelter, which means less money for their food, less money for their future, less money for their health. A remarkable 30,000 families are paying more than half their income on shelter, a deplorable situation.

We have a waiting list for social housing, affordable housing in Ottawa-Carleton that has swelled from 11,000 families to over 15,000 families. This report shows that when the Harris government took office, before it cut the welfare rates, over 36% of welfare recipients were paying more than their shelter allowance towards rent. After the Harris cuts it swelled to more than 80%; 84% are paying more than their shelter allowance for rent, which obviously means less for food, less for health, less for their children, less for their future.

This is a crisis here in Ottawa-Carleton. We in the New Democratic Party have a program to deal with homelessness in Ontario. We are committed to putting \$250 million towards building 30,000 units of affordable social housing across Ontario.

TOBACCO MUSEUM

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): It is my pleasure to draw the attention of the Legislature to the exhibit provided by the Ontario Tobacco Museum and Heritage Centre, a museum located in tobaccotown: Delhi, Ontario.

Since February, the west wing of the Legislature has been home to exhibits that describe the culture and history of communities across our province. The tobacco museum exhibit features a township of Delhi crest, photos, a band uniform and a large brass drum.

The exhibit remembers the Delhi Community Band, first formed in the 1890s and more formalized during the 1950s. One of the band's leaders, Mr Floyd Thomas, was awarded the Centennial Medal, and the band was invited to play at Expo '67 in Montreal. I am told that in its heyday people came from miles around to hear this Delhi band play.

I would like to congratulate the Delhi tobacco museum on their contribution to keeping ethnic culture and traditions alive in Norfolk. Agriculture plays a strong role in Norfolk's heritage. Many European immigrants settled on tobacco farms in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. The Ontario Tobacco Museum and Heritage Centre teaches young people and adults alike about Norfolk's rich multicultural heritage.

I am proud to have the culture of Norfolk represented in this exhibit. I urge all members to take a look at this reflection of a unique history of tobacco country.

1340

COMMUNITY CARE ACCESS CENTRE

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): I want to bring to the attention of the government a problem in my riding and the area of Windsor-Essex county. The community care access centre, although underfunded, is trying to deal with the elderly, the frail and the sick, who are, as we all know, released from hospital quicker and sicker these days. The problem lies not in the lap of the CCAC, the community care access centre, but squarely in the lap of this government. Through its mismanagement and

through its unrelenting desire for privatization and to do it the cheapest rather than the best way, it has forced the community care access centre to dole out the service it provides in giving supplies to the sick.

What has happened is that there are now two suppliers in the city of Windsor. They will only give out supplies two days a week and one week's supply at a time. In the Leamington-Kingsville area, these supplies used to be picked up at Leamington hospital; they no longer can be. Now these frail, elderly and sick must go in to Windsor to pick up these supplies. It's inconvenient and unfair.

BELL CANADA STRIKE

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): It's no fun for any worker to be on strike, but unfortunately Bell Canada has given its employees no other choice. Across this province and down in Niagara, Bell Canada employees, its operators and its technicians have been forced into a strike position by a company that made an \$800-million profit last year and paid its own CEO \$17 million.

Bell Canada wants to sell off the operators' jobs to a US company so that rates for wages will be cut in half, and if workers want to follow those jobs, they're going to be forced to leave their homes. In Niagara, that means leaving Niagara region, perhaps leaving the province. As well, Bell Canada, with its huge profits, has been telling its technicians to take concessions, especially in the area of pensions and pension benefits and in the area of wages, where there hasn't been a wage increase for at least five years.

People, the public, rely on Bell operators and Bell technicians on a daily basis, on an hourly basis, 24 hours a day. Public safety is being put at risk. Bell Canada, with its greed, shows no concern for the welfare of the community, certainly no concern for its workers and indeed a disdain for the working women and men, the employees of Bell Canada, who have made huge profits for that company over the course of decades and generations, and Mike Harris and the Tories do nothing. They abandon high-paying, good, long-term jobs in favour of minimum-wage, part-time, temporary employment. That's the kind of Ontario Mike Harris is making. When is Mike Harris going to show some leadership and tell Bell Canada to keep those jobs in Canada?

SENIORS

Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): I take this opportunity to speak about Ontario's senior citizens, the important role they play in our society and how this government is actively working with seniors to improve their quality of life.

The Silver Seniors of Renfrew and the Arnprior Golden Valley Seniors are two groups that exemplify vitality and a community-building spirit. I attended their luncheon events recently, and I can tell you a few things about seniors in the Ottawa Valley: They're active, well

organized and ready to build a better community. They know that Ontario is now fiscally capable of providing more services to a rapidly growing seniors' population. They deeply appreciate that we have saved Lakeview Nursing Home in Cobden through our commitment of \$4.2 million and that \$14.6 million will be available to replace or upgrade Miramichi Lodge in Pembroke.

Last Friday, I attended a meeting in Eganville, hosted by Reeve Zig Mintha. I was impressed by that community's strong desire to bring even more services to seniors, closer to home.

I thank the Honourable Cam Jackson, Minister of Long-Term Care, for providing the assistance of his staff for that meeting. Joan Kennedy and Gayle Martin did an excellent job.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

RED TAPE REDUCTION ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 VISANT À RÉDUIRE LES FORMALITÉS ADMINISTRATIVES

Mr Tsubouchi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 12, An Act to reduce red tape, to promote good government through better management of Ministries and agencies and to improve customer service by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting three new Acts / Projet de loi 12, Loi visant à réduire les formalités administratives, à promouvoir un bon gouvernement par une meilleure gestion des ministères et organismes et à améliorer le service à la clientèle en modifiant ou abrogeant certaines lois et en édictant trois nouvelles lois.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

HEALTH INSURANCE AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR L'ASSURANCE-SANTÉ

Mr Duncan moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 13, An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act to satisfy the criteria for contribution by the Government of Canada set out in the Canada Health Act / Projet de loi 13, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-santé pour satisfaire aux critères régissant les contributions du gouvernement du Canada qui sont énoncés dans la Loi canadienne sur la santé.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): The bill will put into major health legislation in Ontario the principles of affordability, accessibility and the public nature of Canada's health care system in all pieces of provincial health care legislation.

ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS
AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'ORDRE DES ENSEIGNANTES
ET DES ENSEIGNANTS DE L'ONTARIO

Mr Wildman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 14, An Act to increase teacher representation at the Ontario College of Teachers and to make other amendments to the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 / Projet de loi 14, Loi visant à accroître la représentation des enseignants au sein de l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario et apportant d'autres modifications à la Loi de 1996 sur l'Ordre des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): This bill amends the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996. The composition of the council of the college is changed, increasing the proportion of elected members of the college so that they make up 75% of the council. Provisions are added to provide that the council or a committee will not have a quorum unless the majority of the elected council members are present. The council will be required to elect one of its members as the chair. All committees will be required to have a majority of elected council members.

PETERBOROUGH REGIONAL
HEALTH CENTRE ACT, 1999

Mr Stewart moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr3, An Act respecting Peterborough Regional Health Centre.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

As I'm sure you all know, pursuant to standing order 85, this bill stands referred to the Commissioners of Estate Bills.

COLUMBUS CLUB
OF SAULT STE. MARIE ACT, 1999

Mr Martin moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr8, An Act respecting the Columbus Club of Sault Ste. Marie Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

SAVING LOCAL GOVERNMENT
IN NORFOLK AND HALDIMAND ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 VISANT À PRÉSERVER
LE GOUVERNEMENT LOCAL
À NORFOLK ET À HALDIMAND

Mr Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 15, An Act to eliminate the regional level of municipal government in Norfolk and Haldimand, to cut

duplication and to save taxpayers' money / Projet de loi 15, Loi visant à éliminer le niveau régional du gouvernement municipal à Norfolk et à Haldimand ainsi que le double emploi et à faire réaliser des économies aux contribuables.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): Today I am reintroducing the Saving Local Government act designed to eliminate the regional level of government in Norfolk and Haldimand and to have citizen participation design a new system of local government that taxpayers can afford.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing is required to implement any proposal, and if no proposal is put forward, the minister will appoint a commission to implement a proposal. Any restructuring plan must eliminate the regional level of government and result in at least two municipalities.

1350

ORAL QUESTIONS

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): I have a question for the Minister of Health. I want to direct your attention, because it's not focused, on four hospitals which you consented to have close on Friday: Runnymede and Riverdale in Toronto, Hogarth Westmount in Thunder Bay, and St Peter's in Hamilton, four hospitals that are full of frail elderly people and chronically ill people with special needs.

What your government said on Friday is, we're going to close those hospitals down. We're going to take away care from a setting where they get five times as much nursing care to one where they get one fifth as much; from one where they get twice as much attention from a doctor to one where they get half as much; from one where they don't pay for drugs and equipment to one where they very likely may, with funding on your part, Minister, from \$240 a day down to \$60 a day.

You've got a lot of health commercials out there right now. Why don't you include those facts in your health commercials?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I don't know that the member opposite fully appreciates that what is happening is that there is a conversion of four chronic care hospitals to long-term-care centres. As you know, our government wants to ensure that people in this province have the appropriate services.

Unfortunately, it was your government in the late 1980s, and then throughout the term of the other government, that did not award any long-term-care beds. We now find ourselves in a position where there are many seniors and many frail elderly who don't have accommodation. But we are building 20,000 new long-term-care beds, plus we are converting these facilities in order that these people can have outstanding facilities and

quality of life and get the appropriate level of care that they need.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, you're leaving out the essential facts. You talk about beds you'll build in the future. You will not admit that you're closing 3,000 chronic care beds that exist today, that you're evicting those patients and you're going to warehouse them all across this province, not just in the four hospitals I mentioned in those three communities, but all across the province. You're going to push people with MS and Parkinson's and Huntington's disease and AIDS and people who need medical care, the attention of nurses, into nursing homes, and you won't guarantee the care.

Your own professionals went into Runnymede hospital last month. They went to Riverdale Hospital. There are 450 patients in question. Do you know how many of them they said could survive in a nursing home? Twenty-seven. Twenty-seven out of 450. What are you trying to pull off? You're trying to make us believe that you care for these patients. Minister, then stand in your place today and provide the Liberal guarantee: guarantee these patients will get the same quality of care that they get today and you'll provide chronic care in the future.

Hon Mrs Witmer: I think the member has forgotten it was our government that actually did demonstrate the compassion and the caring, and we did introduce the levels of care. Every individual will be assessed and a determination will be made as to the appropriate level of care. As you know, it was our government that provided the funding formula to the long-term care facilities that does reflect the individual level of care that is required by each individual. Unfortunately, previous governments had never seen fit to introduce that and to respond specifically to the unique patient needs out there.

We're pleased that each of these individuals will have the appropriate level of care and that these facilities will be funded in order to accommodate that.

Mr Kennedy: Soothing words, soothing words to say, "We'll look after these patients." We're closing their hospital, we're wrenching away the licence for the hospital to operate, but we'll provide for them. Is that what's happening around Ontario?

In fact, in Ottawa the Perley-Rideau centre went through one of our conversions. They converted to a nursing home and a long-term care facility, and what happened there? The board of directors of Perley-Rideau, looking after frail, elderly and veterans, is suing you to get enough nursing care to look after their frail, elderly and veterans.

You've taken away the care. You've reduced the care to those patients by \$100 a day.

Interjection.

Mr Kennedy: We hear one of the members from Ottawa saying it's OK. It's not OK. It's not OK that Perley-Rideau has to sue to get proper care.

Minister, today I'll ask you again — it may be your last chance — will you, as the minister responsible for these public hospitals that you want to close, stand up today and guarantee the Liberal standard that the care

will be there and these hospitals will stay open? Will you do that?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I certainly would not want to commit to what your government did, and that was not provide any new long-term care beds for about 10 years. It's our government that has responded to the unique needs of people throughout this province. As I said before, we are providing the level of funding based on the needs of each and every individual. It was our government that recognized we need levels of care. In fact, it was the NDP that dealt with Perley.

Let me quote Carl White, the president of the St Joseph's Care Group, who said on April 24: "It's really exciting to see the Ministry of Health reinvest funds in the long-term care system. This is what is needed to make the total system work."

It's our government that is making sure that each patient receives the level of care required to respond to their unique needs, and we were the first government to do so.

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I have a question today for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. I want to ask you today about a broken promise to people in Ontario with disabilities, but moreover about a broken promise to the entire province.

When the Premier was running for election he made a clear promise. He said that he would consult people with disabilities and that he would pass a meaningful act to protect people with disabilities. We know and people with disabilities know that neither of those promises was kept. You have had four years — four years — and you failed. You failed to consult and you failed to produce. Anything that you introduce now, if in fact you're even going to bother to do that, will be seen for what it is — a sham.

Why did you break the Premier's commitment? Why did you not live up to the commitment made by this Legislature in 1996? Why did you not live up to the commitment made by this Legislature last year and why did you introduce —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Minister.

1400

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): I would say we're not breaking a promise. We introduced the Ontarians with Disabilities Act before Christmas and it died on the order paper. In the interim, between then and now, we have heard and been listening to people with disabilities right across the province. They have said to us that they want us to withdraw the bill, they want us to reconsider what we put forward, and that is what our plan is. We are listening.

Might I say to the member from Windsor-Walkerville, you did nothing and you had five years in which you could have moved forward with a bill. So who are you to say anything?

Mr Duncan: To remind you, the Premier made two very clear commitments, as did you when you introduced your bill, which at the time, by the way, you said was a great piece of legislation. The reason you said that was because you didn't listen in the first instance.

You obviously haven't even read the letter you or the Premier received yesterday. You said you've consulted. Here's what the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee said: "You have continued to refuse to meet with us" — that's a quote — "the very group with whom you pledged in writing to work with to develop the Ontarians with Disabilities Act when you were seeking the public votes in the last election and before you introduced your failed bill."

Minister, who should we believe? Should we believe the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee or should we believe you, in light of your track record of failed legislation and broken promises?

Hon Ms Bassett: I might say to the member opposite, whom should we believe? You are saying, as you said at the press conference the other day, that you wanted us to sit down and introduce legislation in 10 days. Your leader sent a letter to the ODA Committee asking for two years to bring in legislation. In fact, your leader said, "Our goal is to complete this work during the first three years." So it's useless to ask, "Whom can we listen to?", I say, whom can we listen to?

Mr Duncan: It's interesting to listen to the words twisted the way they've been twisted. Here's what you did, Minister. Here's what your record is, and you're the minister. You're the minister and you're the government. You took three years to introduce a substandard piece of legislation. It took five more months, up until last week, to admit that your legislation was worthless, and this in spite of all your protestations to the contrary.

The member for Sarnia remembers what happened in Sarnia when you were there. Other members on the Tory side who are laughing about this — they're laughing now, but believe me, they're going to hear in a couple of weeks. You've lost all the trust of the disabled community. You've had every chance in the world and you've blown them all. You've missed the boat.

Why don't we stop the sham? Why don't we take this to election and see who the people think is telling the truth in this sorry state of affairs?

Hon Ms Bassett: I would say we have not missed any boat. We brought forward a very valid piece of legislation that introduced a systematic plan for people with disabilities to make sure that barriers were broken down. Every single minister was required to review all the policies, programs and legislation in his or her ministry with a view to removing barriers and to present those to the Management Board for review every single year. This is the only way that you can go forward in a systematic way.

PAY EQUITY

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Health, and it concerns this

confidential memo in the ministry about funding pay equity. It says that you're not done trying to avoid paying the lowest paid women in the province the money they're due. First, you tried to avoid it and the courts said no. Now we find out we're going to pay those women who are entitled to proxy pay equity by taking money from other forms of pay equity. In other words, you're going to take money from Patricia to pay Pamela. That's what this discloses.

You've got no trouble finding money to give the wealthiest people in this province a tax cut, but when it comes to the lowest paid women in the province you're going to steal money from some low-paid women in order to cover off your obligations elsewhere. Minister, where are your priorities, paying those good, hard-working health care workers or looking after your wealthy friends?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the leader of the third party well knows, our government has made a commitment to pay equity. In fact the amount of money we are making available is more than any previous government has made available.

Mr Hampton: This is unbelievable. Over a year and a half ago, the courts told you that what you were trying to do was unconstitutional, and for a year and a half you've been forcing those lowest paid women who work in the health sector to wait for the money they're entitled to. That's your commitment. But this memo discloses something else. It gets worse. The memo discloses that you're only prepared to fund pay equity through the financial year 1998, but for 1999 and the year 2000 you have absolutely no commitment to pay equity.

Minister, I ask you again: What's your priority, a tax cut for the wealthiest people in the province, or all those hard-working people who work in the hospitals and the homes for the aged and who are low paid and deserve the money the courts told you to pay them?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again I would remind the leader of the third party that the highest level of support that has ever been provided by any Ontario government for pay equity is being provided by our government. But I'd like to ask you a question, leader of the third party: Why did you introduce legislation in 1992 that delayed the implementation date of pay equity to 1998? Why did you not care about women?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Final supplementary, the member for Riverdale.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Minister, I don't think you even know what's going on in your own ministry. I wonder where this directive came from because I always had the impression that you at least in your party supported pay equity. It's clear today that you don't. No wonder women in droves are turning against this government and don't support you. You should know better.

The NDP platform very clearly states that we will live up to our pay equity law that was passed in 1993 and was not supported by the Liberals, or you by the way then, and was upheld by the courts when Mike Harris tried to

get rid of it. Women know who's on their side and, Minister, they know it's not you or your Premier. I'm going to ask you: Don't evade the issue. We have the document in front of us here. These women, who do some of the most valuable work in our communities, are not getting the money you promised them. Will you commit today to pay out the money they're owed, yes or no?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again I would ask you: Why did you as a government introduce legislation in 1992 that delayed the implementation date of pay equity until 1998? As you know full well, it was supposed to have been achieved in 1995. I would also ask you, why did you, under your social contract, strip \$600 million from the wages of health care workers? Why did you strip \$600 million?

1410

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Education and Training. Your lawyers have successfully argued before the Ontario Court of Appeal that Catholic school boards have no right to levy taxes, that you have the right to set property tax rates behind closed doors and that you can tell school boards and local communities how they must spend their education dollars. That's the summary of the case that I think you've argued.

But last night, when more than 1,000 people gathered to hear how you've betrayed Catholic school supporters, the message that was received there was different. They were prepared to believe you when you said you would improve the funding for their children's schools, but now they know the truth. In the Toronto Catholic District School Board alone you're \$10 million short.

You have won control for now. Will you use that control to adequately fund all of our schools or are you going to make parents choose between textbooks and teachers? How are you going to use that control now?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): The leader of the third party refers to the decision that came down today. I'm sure he has read the decision. At one place in the decision it says, referring to Bill 160, "It provides greater funding to separate schools than that previously available and it ensures that funding for education is distributed equitably to separate schools and public schools alike."

I think that is the key point in all this. That is what we have been saying, that each and every child in Ontario deserves the right to a high-quality education program, deserves exactly the same and equal opportunity to a high-quality education system in the province.

We have put more money into the classrooms across Ontario. We have distributed that money equitably and fairly across the province, in all the Catholic boards and all the public boards, in the French boards and the English boards, and I'm pleased that the decision today has supported the government's position in that matter.

Mr Hampton: Minister, what you're doing is equalizing down. You're not providing the funding that's needed; you're equalizing the funding down.

I wonder if you recognize this statement: "Keep school sites available...make school facilities available to communities so that parents and children everywhere can use the facilities the taxpayers have already paid for...." That statement is from the Mustard-McCain Early Years Study so warmly embraced last week by your Premier.

But you've already decided that you know better than local communities what should happen to those buildings. Your funding formula is forcing the Toronto District School Board to close 10 community schools. You refuse to recognize that there's any use to those schools, built by local taxpayers, beyond the hours of classroom education. Those 10 schools have five child care centres. Three of the schools are also home to parenting and family literacy centres, something the Early Years Study says is a great deal.

Minister, why are you persisting with a funding formula that forces school boards to dissolve valuable assets, approved and paid for by local communities, that will help make these Early Years recommendations come alive and provide the early childhood education that our children need?

Hon David Johnson: I'm just reading from a report in the Toronto Star today where Chair Nyberg says that the Toronto board doesn't like to sell, "Leasing is much more cost-effective." Apparently the Toronto board is not intending to dispose of their schools but to lease them out to other community uses, perhaps day care uses, recreational uses or other kinds of uses.

This is exactly what we have been saying to the school boards, that if they can find other uses to put into those schools to keep them within a community, this is great. We've been in support of that.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Final supplementary, member for Dovercourt.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): It wasn't that long ago when you were telling the Toronto and other school boards they should just sell off all of those extra buildings, as you put it. The bottom line will still be that, because of your funding formula, they will not be used for what they were designed for, which is as schools and as centres for such things as child care and parenting centres, which is what they should be used for.

The reality is this: In my own west-end community of Toronto, families are devastated by the possible loss now of five public schools. Add to that the betrayal the Catholic parents so clearly told us about last night because of your funding formula. I will not be surprised if we also see the five other schools on the Catholic side that were slated to be closed come back on the list for possible closure. Again, we could see 10 or 11 schools, in a little part of west Toronto alone, having to face closure because of your funding formula. You're hearing that now from public school parents and from Catholic parents, all saying the same thing.

Minister, you've got your way for now. You won the court decision. Will you use the powers you have now to change the funding formula so that it provides adequate funding for the public and Catholic schools in this province?

Hon David Johnson: I just wonder where the member opposite was in 1994 when, under the NDP government, there were four schools closed here in Toronto. Where was the outrage at that time, when there were four schools closed in Toronto?

Interjections.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon David Johnson: The chair of the Toronto school board has indicated on several occasions that over the past 20 years just in two of the municipalities alone, North York and Etobicoke, less than half of the area of Metropolitan Toronto, 70 schools have been closed through NDP governments, Tory governments, Liberal governments. As a matter of fact, when the Liberals were in power, 37 of those schools were closed.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon David Johnson: The board is going through a normal process, looking apparently at 10 schools. None of them may close; some of them may close. They may find alternative uses for those schools, which I think would be great. These are decisions that boards have made over a period of time, any number of years, and they're going through exactly the same process here today.

IPPERWASH PROVINCIAL PARK

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is to the Attorney General, the minister responsible for native affairs. Ontario wants to know the truth of what happened at the shooting death of Dudley George at Ipperwash. We will only find that out through a full public inquiry. The concern is that the evidence is disappearing. The privacy commissioner disclosed to us that on April 19 a senior government official was transferred, and that very day his electronic files were destroyed. We asked Minister Runciman why that happened, and he said this: "Indeed we are concerned about the loss of these files in terms of our ability to retain very important and critical files. I share your concern with respect to that. The current deputy has initiated a review of this situation and a review of the retention policy."

My question to the minister responsible for native affairs is, now that, I assume, that review has been completed, have you discovered whether or not any other Ipperwash files have been destroyed?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Certainly everything that has been requested by way of freedom of information requests has been produced. There is a full record of that documentation. We have co-operated and will

continue to co-operate with the Information and Privacy Commissioner in that regard, as we have done to date.

Mr Phillips: That's not the question. The question is, have any other files been destroyed or not? That's the question. Minister Runciman made an undertaking to review. He said that he agreed these were crucial files. He was upset they had been destroyed. This is evidence, clear evidence that we will need in a full public inquiry, destroyed. The day that this person left the office the electronic files were destroyed. The minister undertook on behalf of the government to review this, to find out if any other files were destroyed or not and to give us an update. My question is this: You are responsible for our affairs with our First Nations. You have this responsibility. Tell me what you have done about this and can you guarantee the House that there have been no other Ipperwash files destroyed?

Hon Mr Harnick: As I've said, to the best of my knowledge, the record is complete. The freedom of information documentation that's been requested has been turned over in the course of a civil action. There are exchanges of documentation taking place. The record is complete and I have no further information.

1420

DOMESTIC ABUSE

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the minister responsible for women's issues. Your Premier is out today on the campaign trail churning out more rhetoric about law and order, and your government talks tough about law and order but the truth is you've failed to protect the most vulnerable people in this province, in this case, women and children who are victims of domestic violence. On Tuesday, April 20, Sabrina Benkartoussa and her sister were killed by Sabrina's estranged husband. He then killed himself. We have learned that the estranged husband had five charges against him: assault, assault with a weapon, assault causing bodily harm and two charges of uttering death threats, but when he appeared before the College Park court a month ago, the justice of the peace released him on bail.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question.

Mr Hampton: We hear your Premier's empty rhetoric. We want to know what went wrong. You've got 213 recommendations from the May-Iles inquiry. How many crown attorneys —

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): Mr Speaker, I would refer that to the Attorney General.

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): Certainly we have begun a process of implementation of the May-Iles recommendations. There is a joint committee on domestic violence looking at the day-to-day operation of the implementation. We have implemented a safety first

audit. We have DART programs that are operating around the province and expanding. We have eight specialized domestic violence courts that have been created. Bail courts exist and we have increased the number of counsel, lawyers, crown attorneys, in the bail courts when they deal with these issues. We have had extensive crown training programs. We have had training programs for crown attorneys on issues of firearms. We've had training programs dealing with children's lawyers. We have been involved in a training process for court clerks.

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mr Harnick: Certainly we have maintained and increased resources to the crown attorney's office to deal with these issues and the May-Iles implementation —

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary, member for Riverdale.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Minister responsible for women's issues, the words we just heard aren't good enough. It's words. We're seeing more words and not enough action. Your government talks about protecting children, but you try telling that to the seven-month-old baby who no longer has a mother or a father as a result of that killing.

On Friday there was another murder-suicide. Halina Deborah Abraham was killed by her former partner who then killed himself. What are you doing to protect the five-year-old child of those people? Also on Friday, Melissa Pajkowski was killed by her ex-boyfriend who then tried to kill himself.

Minister, that's a lot of women dead in one week, a lot of children and family and friends killed in one week in just Toronto alone. It's enough to make you cry, isn't it? But tears aren't enough. You've had these recommendations for more than a year. We are tired of pilot projects and empty rhetoric. These women are now dead. We want you to take action. Minister, will you just get on with the job? Tell us what went wrong here and recommend getting on with those recommendations today.

Hon Mr Harnick: Among all the ministries that are involved in the implementation of May-Iles, approximately 80% of the recommendations have been implemented or are in the course of being implemented. The balance of the issues will be implemented. The jury indicated and recognized that it would take a significant period of time to do all this.

We created eight specialized domestic assault violence courts which are dedicated to prosecuting these kinds of terrible issues. We've expanded the use of domestic assault review teams. We've enhanced training on domestic violence and sexual assault for crown attorneys. We've doubled the number of assistant crown attorneys in our busiest bail courts. We've doubled the number of victim/witness assistance programs.

We are taking significant steps to implement the recommendations of the May-Iles inquest and we will continue to do so. We will continue to work with crown attorneys, to work with police services, to work with

community groups to make sure that we do everything we can to deal with this very difficult and very serious problem.

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I just wanted to point out that we have the former member for Parkdale-High Park with us, Mr Jesse Flis.

ASSISTANCE TO FARMERS

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. As you know, Minister, I along with several of my colleagues have urged you and the Minister of Finance to extend the rebate on provincial sales tax for farm building materials.

On behalf of the residents of Chatham-Kent and the hard-working greenhouse growers of Leamington and Essex, my thanks to you and the Minister of Finance.

As you know, Minister, strong leadership by this government has produced many —

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): He's looking puzzled.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): This is Oscar stuff.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Hold on. Let's keep a little order. It's hard to hear the question.

Interjections.

The Speaker: I heard that.

Member for Chatham.

Mr Carroll: As you know, the strong leadership of this government has produced many tax cuts, I believe about 69 in total. Would you share with us the province-wide impact of this particular rebate on sales tax on farm building materials?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): I want to thank my colleague from Chatham-Kent for being a very strong supporter of the agri-food industry not only in Chatham-Kent but in all of southwestern Ontario.

I am pleased that since May 1996 the rebate on capital construction at the farm level has totalled some \$21 million, and that is supporting some \$250 million into farm construction and farm improvements. Certainly, it's good news for Ontario, \$21 million being returned to the farmers of Ontario. This was initiated by this government and we are looking to make it a permanent rebate on taxes. This is certainly good news for the farmers of Ontario.

Mr Carroll: Thanks, Minister, for that good news. I guess we can summarize that the strong leadership of our Premier and people like yourself has generated the many tax cuts for the province, and those tax cuts of course translate into jobs and prosperity.

Over and above this particular tax cut, can you share with us any other initiatives that your ministry has put forward to help expand the very important agri-food industry in Ontario?

Interjections.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: I'm a bit disappointed that somehow or other the opposition doesn't take this very seriously. It is very serious business to the farmers of Ontario. We have increased our exports to \$6.3 billion in the last calendar year. It's an increase by almost 10%.

Certainly the member for Chatham-Kent is a strong supporter of —

Interjection.

The Speaker: The member for Kingston and The Islands.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: The member for Kingston and The Islands seems to think it's a big joke. I feel very sad about that, because the greenhouse industry in the area that's represented by my colleague from Chatham-Kent is increasing by some 20% a year. Thanks to the rebate on the sales tax to capital construction, this has promoted this kind of construction. We are shipping from the Leamington area tractor-trailer loads of tomatoes and cucumbers every day and we're certainly proud of that. Most of them are going to the United States of America.

The Speaker: New question, member for Hamilton East.

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): You could have announced it four months before that and you sat on it.

Hon Mr Villeneuve: If you are against it, Bruce, say it.

Mr Crozier: I am in favour of it. I wrote a letter to you.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

1430

DRIVE CLEAN

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of the Environment, if I can ask you about your Drive Clean program.

What we have seen is nothing but totally inept mishandling of this program by your ministry. We're seeing horror stories day after day about your pre-testing scam where mechanics rip off consumers who go in to get their vehicles tested for emissions and then come out with bills of \$1,000 or \$2,000.

Can you tell me how you've managed, through mishandling and incompetence, to screw up such a good program and allow consumers to get ripped off every day in the province?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I'm sorry about the lack of support by the Liberal Party for this very important program to clean our air here in the province. We heard from the Liberal government way back in 1988 that there was going to be a program to test motor vehicles. What happened? Nothing. Nothing happened during their reign.

This is one of the most comprehensive programs in all of North America. We're going to be testing 120,000 vehicles each and every month under this program. We're going to be testing every car and light truck, every heavy-duty truck, every bus in this province over the next

year. It's a very comprehensive program. We have 600 Drive Clean facilities across this province and we are endeavouring to do this in the cleanest, most consumer-oriented fashion possible.

Mr Agostino: Minister, you have totally ignored the fact of the rip-offs that are occurring as a result of your incompetence in handling this program. Consumers have been ripped off \$500, \$1,000, \$2,000 every time they go there because of this pre-test that you've put into place.

You also have included a tax grab in this program: \$10 out of every \$30 goes back to your government to administer the program. That's a \$12.5-million tax grab that your government has put in through the backdoor that hurts Ontarians every day.

You've conveniently excluded taxis from this program. Your trucks and buses don't kick in until September.

Very clearly you have shown that you can take a good idea and through incompetence, through not knowing what you're doing, you have managed to screw it up badly.

What do you say to the consumers who have been ripped off by your program, senior citizens who go in and come out with a \$1,000 bill as a result of what you've done and the fact that you have put in no real mechanisms to protect them? Again, can I ask you how you've managed to take such a good idea and screw it up through your incompetence and your government's incompetence with this program?

Hon Mr Sterling: Both parties urged this government to implement this program. As soon as the rubber hits the road they back off and they say that they can't support the implementation of this program.

There have been allegations about some kind of rip-off artists. I have not had one reference from this member's office about an individual. We will investigate any problems. We will deal strictly with anybody who is attempting to rip off any consumer in this province with regard to this program.

We are walking the talk. We refuse to slip back into talking the talk, as this party did when it was in power.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): My question is for the Minister of Health. Minister, you are probably aware that a lot of work has been done over the last year in Sault Ste Marie and Algoma to make a case for the placing of satellite radiation therapy in our city. We've gotten support from the Canadian Cancer Society, from local physicians and from Cancer Care Ontario. Even the Cancer Care Ontario northeastern region council has approved the application for this service. When the Health Services Restructuring Commission came to Sault Ste Marie to talk about the new configuration of our hospitals, it gave the green light to the hospital to begin the process of working with the ministry to have this service located in our city.

Today I bring with me the phenomenal number of 28,188 petitions, signed by people from 10 Algoma

municipalities, and some 135 letters just to share with you how serious we are about the need for this service in our community.

While you're answering the question as to what the ministry's response will be to this request, I am going to send these petitions and letters over to you with the pages. There is also a letter from the chair of the task force, Linda Watt, to go with it.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the member knows, the Health Services Restructuring Commission issued its final directions about a month ago. The ministry is presently in a position where it is reviewing the report, as it has done in the case of all of the commission's final directives, and in the future hopes to be in a position where it will make an announcement as to the responses to the commission.

Mr Martin: Thank you very much, Minister. We know in Sault Ste Marie of the co-operative efforts that are going on behind the scenes to make sure that this initiative actually happens and that Sault Ste Marie in the very near future will be the new home for a satellite radiation therapy service.

Some 100 people have worked very diligently to collect the petitions that I have just sent over, people like Peter Vaudry, Linda Watt, Mary Ellen Clarke, Dr David Wall and Anthony Ubaldi, to name just a few. They would be much interested today in perhaps some explanation from you as to the time lines. Just when will you be looking at this, when do you think you'll be ready to make an announcement and when will we in Sault Ste Marie and Algoma no longer have to travel the long distances we now have to travel to Sudbury and other places to get this very important and essential service?

Hon Mrs Witmer: I guess what this points out is the fact that the commission has taken a very careful look at your community. They have specifically taken a look to determine what programs are most appropriate. It was unfortunate that this task had not been undertaken by prior governments.

However, as you know, not only did they recommend the cancer bunker, but they've also indicated there is a need for reinvestment to the tune of \$45.6 million in capital and \$17.2 million in programs. That includes additional money for long-term care, for home care, for rehabilitation and sub-acute care. Again, the ministry is presently reviewing the final directions from the commission, and we hope to soon be in a position where we can make a response.

As I say, this was long overdue, our government did make the tough decisions and we will be issuing our final response soon.

1440

YOUTH JUSTICE COMMITTEES

Mr Tim Hudak (Niagara South): My question is to the Attorney General. Minister, for some time the people of Port Colborne have been pushing for a youth justice committee. They feel it's an appropriate way for the

community to have a hands-on role in the administration of the justice system for youth in the Niagara Peninsula. In fact, the crime commission was down and heard that very thing from the people of Port Colborne. It has been very well received in the community, but there are still a few questions I face from time to time on how the youth justice committees operate. Could the Attorney General please explain to the House how the youth justice committees will help fight youth crime?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I'd like to thank the member for Niagara South for the credit and also thank him for his help in developing some enthusiasm for this program.

As you're aware, I recently announced six new youth justice committees that will be operating as pilot projects in Port Colborne, Barrie, Cornwall, Kitchener, Ottawa and Scarborough. These committees will involve members of the community who will meet with young offenders who have committed a first-time minor offence. They will develop with that young offender the appropriate response to their actions so the community can be paid back, so the victim can receive an apology and so ordinary citizens in the community will be able to hold young offenders more accountable for their actions.

This, we believe, will help ensure that young offenders will face the proper consequences for their actions and hopefully avoid a life of crime.

Mr Hudak: I think one of the reasons why the Wainfleet-Port Colborne Healthy Lifestyles Committee and the people of Port Colborne really pushed for the youth justice committees was because they felt it was a very effective way to reduce recidivism. They also felt it an important way to have a hands-on role in the justice system locally. In fact, they would say that other provinces that have tried youth justice committees have found that they have an important impact on reducing reoffending.

Could the minister inform the House of what evidence exists to help reduce recidivism?

Hon Mr Harnick: In the provinces of Manitoba and Alberta, youth justice committees have been operating for some time. It has been the experience of those programs that the recidivism rate drops considerably when a youth justice committee is involved with minor first-time offenders.

The previous government had a project in Cornwall that I think will be somewhat similar to the pilot projects that we will be developing. We've obviously used the good work that was done in Cornwall to understand that the recidivism rate is significantly less as a result of the use of youth justice committees. In Cornwall, 300 cases have been reviewed and only 33 —

Interjection.

Hon Mr Harnick: I gave you credit, if you were listening.

Only 33 people reoffended. That is about half of the reoffender rate.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.

Hon Mr Harnick: I think the Cornwall project — Mr Hampton would like some compliment about this, and I'll give him another compliment, because it is —

The Speaker: Member for Sudbury.

Interjection.

The Speaker: You're finished.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Hold on. Would the member for Grey-Owen Sound come to order.

ONTARIO BUSINESS COLLEGE

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. Yesterday the Ontario Business College was placed in receivership at its 12 locations across the province. Unless a suitable buyer is found, the college will close its doors, leaving 1,484 students high and dry. Your Ontario student assistance program will not take any calls from these students. Instead, OSAP is referring all calls back to the financial aid offices at the 12 colleges. Panic-stricken students are asking important questions which will affect their careers and ultimately their lives, and no one is giving them the answers.

Since OSAP is refusing to take their calls and since the financial aid offices can't give them the answers, what guarantees are you, as the minister responsible, going to provide these students with respect to their course completion, their investments in tuition and their OSAP loans?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): The member for Sudbury is raising an important issue with regard to a particular private school with a large number of students across the province of Ontario. The assurance I will give to him is that the ministry staff is working very closely with the officials from this particular school. The ministry is aware of the seriousness of the situation, the urgency of the situation.

My understanding is that there are some potential buyers involved that would take over the situation and that the students' education would be carried on as normal in that event. That's certainly what the attempts are geared towards, to ensure that the students who are enrolled here get the value for their money and get the education they need, and all of those attempts and all of that work is taking place as we speak.

Mr Bartolucci: Minister, when an institution like the Ontario Business College opens its doors and asks for a year's tuition up front, it assumes the public trust. When you, as the minister responsible, approve OSAP loans for those courses, you as the minister assume the public trust as well.

Terry Gordon from Sudbury wants to know the status of the \$6,500 investment he made for the computer program course he's taking. Lisa Defousses from Windsor wonders how she'll feed her three children, because she's not sure what the status of her OSAP loan is. There are some students, as you know, who have paid \$13,995 for a massage therapy course; \$8,995 for a police foundations course. There are staff who don't

know whether or not they'll be having a paycheque on Friday.

Minister, they want some guarantees from you. They know there are negotiations going on, but they want some guarantees from you with regard to course completion, with regard to their investment in tuition and with regard to OSAP loans. Please give them some hope. Give them some type of guarantee today.

Hon David Johnson: The private schools in the province of Ontario are very important in terms of the education system. There are literally tens of thousands of students involved in all of the various private schools. Of course they complement to a certain degree the public colleges and public universities where there are over 400,000 students in the province.

Again, the assurance I will give is that while this is a matter that has just recently cropped up, the ministry staff had been involved immediately once the circumstances of the situation were known. The ministry staff are working very diligently with the principals involved. The ministry staff are working as hard as they can to ensure that each and every student has the education that they deserve and that they paid for through this particular private college.

TRANSIT SERVICES

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. I want to quote to the minister something he said during the Toronto transit strike. He said people shouldn't be as dependent on public transit and that, "If you rely too much on public transit, then everything grinds to a halt."

We're wondering what world you live in, because transport studies show that if you didn't have GO Transit — never mind the TTC — you'd have to build 13 extra lanes of highway into Toronto and out.

Minister, how many Spadina Expressways are you going to build so that people are less dependent on transit?

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation): His riding is safe from a Spadina Road. But I can also tell the honourable member that I am a full supporter of public transit, as is my government. I think if the honourable member will check the record, what I was trying to convey perhaps —

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I am having a great deal of difficulty hearing the minister.

Hon Mr Clement: What I'd like to repeat, as part of the interview, to this House is that I said simply that all great urban municipalities have a mix of transportation nodes or modes. It includes public transit. It includes regional transit. It includes the automobile as well as other forms of transportation. That is the test of a great city, that it has a mix of public transit or private transit available to the individuals in that city.

1450

I believe that our government has put its money where its mouth is. We have just recently given \$106 million to

GO Transit for capital needs. We wrote a cheque last year for \$829 million to the TTC for the completion of the Sheppard subway system. Those are real dollars from the taxpayers that the opposition seems to discount or not to care about. We have put our money where our mouth is, and I support the government policy on that issue.

The Speaker: Supplementary, the member for Dovercourt.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I'm glad the minister is now reconsidering his position but there's no mistaking the impression he left with his own words on that radio program. He very clearly left the impression that in Toronto we were relying too much on public transit, because he said, "If you rely too much on public transit, then everything grinds to a halt." So what are people supposed to take from that? It may very well explain why his government downloaded \$160 million in annual transit costs on to the city of Toronto despite the minister's previous statements.

Perhaps that's why we had a two-day transit strike that his government did nothing to resolve. Quite frankly, it took the NDP, the third party in this House, to get you out of the mess and to do the work that your Premier and your Minister of Labour should have done.

I don't know if what you'd like is that public transit should just go away or if you think it's some kind of socialist plot, but it's here to stay and it needs your support. Is it a question that you really dislike public transit so much or that you just think giving your wealthy friends a tax cut is more important than funding public transit in Toronto and throughout the greater Toronto area?

Hon Mr Clement: The answer to both halves of the honourable member's question is no, neither. The proper answer, and I think it's representative in the government's actions over the last four years, is that we want to make sure there is a strong, integrated, vibrant public transit system in the greater Toronto area.

That's why there's a Greater Toronto Services Board that can integrate public transit for the first time in the history of Ontario across regional lines. That's why we are giving those tools to the local municipalities, so that they can integrate transit. That's why we've put our money where our mouth is on \$829 million worth of capital for the TTC and \$106 million worth of capital for GO Transit.

I am quite happy to stand on our record when it comes to public transit and I know that the honourable member should work with us, as he did last week, to make sure that it succeeds for the people of Ontario.

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): "To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we, the consumers, feel gas prices are too high throughout Ontario;

"Whereas we, the consumers, support the Ontario Liberal caucus's attempt to have the Mike Harris government introduce predatory gas pricing legislation;

"Whereas we, the consumers, want the Mike Harris government to act so that the consumer can get a break at the pumps rather than going broke at them;

"Whereas we, the consumers, are fuming at being hosed at the pumps and want Mike Harris to gauge our anger;

"Furthermore, we, the consumers, want Mike Harris to know we want to be able to go to the pumps and fill our gas tanks without emptying our pockets;

"Therefore, we petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to introduce predatory gas pricing legislation in order to control the amount of money we, the consumers, are forced to pay at the gas pumps."

Of course, I affix my signature to that petition.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): My petition is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, signed by residents in Ottawa West.

"Whereas the government of Ontario has imposed a politically motivated funding formula that will force the closure of hundreds of schools across Ontario;

"Whereas the only reason for the funding formula is to justify removing more than \$1 billion from the education system so that the wealthiest Ontarians can get a tax break;

"Whereas the schools are the heart of our communities and to close schools would be to cut out the heart of our communities;

"Whereas a properly funded, quality education system is critical to the well-being of the children of this province and the future of the province itself;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario scrap the funding formula and save our schools by properly funding public education, starting with the return of more than \$1 billion taken out of education by the government of Ontario."

I am proud to affix my signature to it.

ABORTION

Mr Marcel Beaubien (Lambton): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that's been signed by approximately 100 people and it reads as follows:

"Whereas the Ontario health system is overburdened and unnecessary spending must be cut; and

"Whereas pregnancy is not a disease, injury or illness and abortions are not therapeutic procedures; and

"Whereas the vast majority of abortions are done for reasons of convenience or finance; and

"Whereas the province has the exclusive authority to determine what services will be insured; and

"Whereas the Canada Health Act does not require funding for elective procedures; and

"Whereas there is mounting evidence that abortion is in fact hazardous to women's health; and

"Whereas Ontario taxpayers funded over 45,000 abortions in 1993 at an estimated cost of \$25 million;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to cease from providing any taxpayers' dollars for the performance of abortions."

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Petitions. The photogenic member for St Catharines.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This is a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas essential public services have been deprived of government funding because the Conservative government of Mike Harris has diverted these funds to self-serving political propaganda ads in the form of pamphlets delivered to homes, newspaper advertisements and radio and TV commercials;

"Whereas the Harris government advertising blitz is a blatant abuse of public office and a shameful waste of taxpayers' dollars;

"Whereas the Harris Conservatives ran on a platform of eliminating what it referred to as government waste and unnecessary expenditures while it squanders over \$100 million on clearly partisan advertising;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government of Mike Harris to immediately end their abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising."

I add my signature to this petition, as I'm in complete agreement with all of the sentiments that are expressed in this petition.

The Speaker: Thank you so much. Petitions.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Speaker, I think you did that without blushing too.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): A petition to save the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital.

"To the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned citizens of Hamilton and the surrounding communities, beg leave to petition the government of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has announced the closure of the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario, through the Health Services Restructuring Commission, is divesting its responsibility for mental health care without any

consultation with the people of Hamilton-Wentworth; and

"Whereas the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital has a reputation for excellence and is a leader in providing mental health care services and many unique programs; and

"Whereas in 1998 the American Psychiatric Association awarded their gold award to the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital for its program on mood disorders; and

"Whereas both city and regional councils oppose the closure and more than 30,000 people have signed petitions opposing the hospital's closure; and

"Whereas the people of Hamilton-Wentworth will pay the price when the Harris government shuts down the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital;

"Therefore we, the people of Hamilton-Wentworth who care about quality, accessibility and publicly accountable mental health care, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital site open and deliver the services and programs from that location."

I proudly add my name to those of these Hamilton petitioners.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): Recently I met with members of the Christian school community, John Vanasselt, George Petrusma and Fred Spoelstra from Durham Christian High School and they presented me with this petition, which I might add I support.

"Whereas this government has undertaken to reform the system of education to ensure fair funding for Ontario's children; and

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has stated that the province could, if it so chooses, pass legislation extending funding to denominational schools other than Roman Catholic schools without infringing the rights guaranteed Roman Catholic separate schools; and

"Whereas providing our children with an excellent education consistent with our cultural and religious beliefs is a necessity and not a matter of preference; and

"Whereas independent schools successfully educate children across the entire spectrum of learning abilities and special needs; and

"Whereas all children of taxpaying Ontario parents deserve to have funding distributed in a manner that does not discriminate against those not using the public Catholic schools;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, respectfully request that the government take immediate steps to extend fair funding to all students of the province."

I will affix my name to this petition.

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PORNOGRAPHY

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): I have a petition signed by 130 residents from the greater Cornwall area.

Many of these signatures were collected by Frances O'Dair from the Catholic Women's League at the St Columban's parish.

To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children are exposed to pornography in variety stores and video retail outlets;

"Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to pornography;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To enact legislation which will create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to pornography in retail outlets; prevent minors from entering establishments which rent or sell pornography; restrict the location of such establishments to non-residential areas."

I've also signed by name to that petition.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): I have a petition dealing with red light cameras to make high collision intersections safer, an issue very important in Ottawa-Carleton.

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas red light cameras can dramatically assist in reducing the number of injuries and deaths resulting from red light runners; and

"Whereas red light cameras can only take pictures of licence plates, thus reducing privacy concerns; and

"Whereas all revenues from violations can be easily directed to a designated fund to improve safety at high-collision intersections; and

"Whereas there is a growing disregard for traffic laws, resulting in serious injury to pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and especially children and seniors; and

"Whereas the provincial government has endorsed the use of a similar camera system to collect tolls on the new Highway 407 tollway; and

"Whereas mayors and concerned citizens across Ontario have been seeking permission to deploy these cameras due to limited police resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario support the installation of red light cameras at high-collision intersections to monitor and prosecute motorists who run red lights."

I am proud to affix my signature to this.

PROTECTION FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 75 people:

"Whereas nurses in Ontario often experience coercion to participate in practices which directly contravene their deeply held ethical standards; and

"Whereas pharmacists in Ontario are often pressured to dispense and/or sell chemicals or devices contrary to their moral or religious beliefs; and

"Whereas public health workers in Ontario are expected to assist in providing controversial services and promoting controversial materials against their consciences; and

"Whereas physicians in Ontario often experience pressure to give referrals for medications, treatments and/or procedures which they believe to be gravely immoral; and

"Whereas competent health care workers and students in various health care disciplines in Ontario have been denied training, employment, continued employment and advancement in their intended fields and suffered other forms of unjust discrimination because of the dictates of their consciences; and

"Whereas the health care workers experiencing such unjust discrimination have at present no practical and accessible legal means to protect themselves;

"We, the undersigned, urge the government of Ontario to enact legislation explicitly recognizing the freedom of conscience of health care workers, prohibiting coercion of and unjust discrimination against health care workers because of their refusal to participate in matters contrary to the dictates of their consciences and establishing penalties for such coercion and unjust discrimination."

VISITING SPECIALIST CLINICS

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I have a petition signed by literally hundreds of people from Algoma-Manitoulin. It says:

"To the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas the objective of the visiting specialist clinic program is to provide specialty services in communities where the population base cannot support a full-time specialist and where specialty services are established more than 40 kilometres away from those communities; and

"Whereas communities in Algoma-Manitoulin, including Espanola, Manitoulin Island, Elliot Lake, Blind River, Chapleau, Wawa, Hornepayne and Manitouwadge are situated great distances from the nearest established specialty services and travelling such distances poses undue hardship on people requiring these services; and

"Whereas the Ministry of Health is to withdraw funding for specialist support staff, seriously threatening the clinic program; and

"Whereas funding by the Ministry of Health for travel grants would far outweigh the costs to the ministry of providing support staff funding;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to restore funding for support staff for the visiting specialist clinic program."

FIRE IN HAMILTON

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario that reads as follows:

"Whereas two years ago, Hamilton was the site of one of the worst environmental disasters in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Plastimet fire raged for three days in a residential area of Hamilton, releasing furans, large quantities of heavy metals and other dangerous chemicals and consuming 400 tonnes of plastic, including polyvinyl chloride, PVC, which releases extremely toxic substances, such as dioxins, which are thought to cause cancer and disruptions to endocrine systems; and

"Whereas the city of Hamilton declared a state of emergency and a one-day evacuation of area residents because of fears about airborne toxins; and

"Whereas the government has cut funding to the Ministry of the Environment by more than 35% and laid off more than 750 people who worked to protect our environment; and

"Whereas we urgently need a public inquiry to find whether these cuts played a role in causing the Plastimet fire, whether the evacuation process was adequate, if residents and workers received adequate warning of the danger, are there ways to improve responses to these life-threatening fires and how to prevent the nightmare of other Plastimet fires in all our communities; and

"Whereas for the past two years the Harris government has steadfastly refused to hold such a public inquiry or listen to municipalities, labour organizations, environmental groups and firefighter organizations, who have all urged the government to hold a public inquiry; and

"Whereas the Harris Conservative government has allowed corporate polluters to operate with virtual impunity in a climate of deregulation or industry self-regulation, along with cuts to monitoring and enforcement mechanisms;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to put the safety and health of the people of Hamilton before the interests of corporate polluters and immediately hold a full public inquiry into the Plastimet fire."

I continue to support these Hamilton petitioners.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): I've received names on petitions from farms and towns in my riding, including Courtland, La Salette, Langton, Cedarville and Windham Centre concerning schools.

"Whereas the closing of Delhi District Secondary School would be disastrous to our town identity; and

"Whereas such closure would be a direct consequence of the creation of a new Catholic high school in Simcoe, we, the undersigned, petition the Harris government to intervene and direct the Grand Erie public and the Brant/Haldimand-Norfolk Catholic school boards to work together to ensure the continued existence of Delhi

District Secondary School and other surrounding Norfolk secondary schools."

I affix my name to this petition.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): I've got a very important petition here for the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It states:

"Whereas essential public services have been deprived of government funding because the Conservative government of Mike Harris has diverted these funds to self-serving political propaganda in the form of pamphlets delivered to homes, newspaper advertisements and radio and television commercials; and

"Whereas the Harris government advertising blitz is a blatant abuse of public office and a shameful waste of taxpayers' dollars; and

"Whereas the Harris Conservatives ran on a platform of eliminating what it referred to as government waste and unnecessary expenditures while it squandered over \$100 million on clearly partisan advertising;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government of Mike Harris to immediately end this abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising."

I have signed this petition as well.

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ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I want to take the opportunity today to address this Legislature at some length, because I believe it is likely the last time I'll have the privilege of doing so before a provincial election. So I want to take the time to take a look back over the past four years, but I think, more importantly, to take a look ahead at the next four years, and in fact even beyond that.

Our province is, for all intents and purposes, a very different place today than it was just a few short years ago. We've gone from a province whose system of publicly funded universal health care was second to none to a province where we can no longer count on basic health and nursing care. We've gone from a province that used to boast about the fact that in Ontario any student who worked hard and made the grade could afford to go to university; we've gone to a province that is locking its doors to higher education to all but the sons and daughters of our richest citizens. We've gone from a province where parents chose public schools because they knew the quality of education was as good as any education that money could buy; we've gone to a pro-

vince where enrolment in private schools is skyrocketing. We've gone from a province with a debt of \$87 billion to a province with a debt that is about to exceed \$110 billion, thanks to the Harris government.

This last piece of information, Madam Speaker, you will know comes as a real shock to most Ontarians, because the natural assumption is made that the angst, the anxiety, the anguish, the pain and the instability we have gone through when it comes to our health care and our education are made up for on the fiscal front. People like to think that at least the Harris government has made advances on the fiscal front. I can tell them that they have not. In fact, what they have done is they've added \$23 billion to the provincial debt. They borrowed roughly \$10 billion to give Ontarians a tax cut. The additional debt load works out to about \$7,500 in additional debt for each and every Ontario family.

I think it's particularly telling that despite a booming economy, thanks largely to sustained economic growth south of the border, the Harris government continues to receive the same poor credit rating today as the NDP received after five years of one of the worst economic recessions in the history of this province. Unlike Mike Harris, "just as good as the NDP" is not a slogan that I would be proud to campaign on.

Mike Harris likes to say that he has made the tough decisions, and while it's true that the last four years have been especially tough on our hospitals and our schools, the decisions made by Mike Harris weren't tough; they were wrong. Mike Harris damaged patient care by cutting funding to our hospitals, firing nurses and turning our emergency rooms into waiting rooms. That wasn't tough; it was wrong. He has hurt our children by closing schools, cutting classroom spending and turning education into a battleground. That wasn't tough; it was wrong. He has threatened our future by adding \$23 billion to the provincial debt, increasing property taxes and introducing new user fees. That wasn't tough; it was wrong.

The Harris agenda works for the wealthy few, the Premier's closest friends and advisers and high-priced consultants. They can buy their health care and decent education for their kids, but the rest of us want a new direction. The rest of us want an Ontario where we can all succeed, and that's what the 20/20 Plan is all about: It's a clear vision for Ontario's future.

Unlike Mike Harris's short-sighted approach to health care, education and the province's finances, our 20/20 Plan lays out what we'll do to make certain that Ontario works for each and every Ontarian, not just for the next five or 10 years but right through the year 2020.

I'm going to speak at some length about the contents of our plan today, but I want to outline very briefly what we cover in this plan — eight areas that are vital to our future — and I'll be concentrating on four: health care, education, colleges and universities, of course our fiscal plan, the environment, homelessness, strong and safe communities, and ensuring that our kids get off to the best possible start in life. Before I get into the first four, I

want to share with viewers something of the values that are reflected by the commitments contained in this plan.

As Liberals, we believe, perhaps more than anything else, that it doesn't matter where you come from, it doesn't matter how long you've been here, it doesn't matter what your station in life is, it doesn't matter who you're connected to, it doesn't matter how much personal wealth you or your parents have, if you live in our province, you get the best possible publicly funded and publicly delivered health care and education.

We believe that all Ontarians are entitled to opportunity. Opportunity really consists of two things for us as Liberals. For one thing, it's a ladder. We extend the ladder of education. We build it strong, durable, and we ask our people to climb it. We can't pull them up it, we can't push them up it, and we can't guarantee anybody a job. But we can guarantee that they'll have education there, good education at the primary and secondary level and affordable education at the post-secondary level.

We also intend to ensure that there is a strong health care net at the bottom of that ladder. We want people to take comfort in knowing that if they have to be able to count on a hospital bed, if they have to be able to count on special care for their four-hours-old baby, it's there for them. We don't want them to have to worry about that, because we want them to be successful, we want them to be entrepreneurial, we want them to be taking on the world in the way that only we here in this province can.

I can tell you that on the basis of conversations with thousands and thousands of Ontarians, people don't really ask for a lot from their government. But there are two things in particular that they want to be able to count on. One of those is health care and the other is education. Our 20/20 Plan is going to deliver to each and every Ontarian health care that they can count on and education that they can count on.

Let's begin by speaking to the issue of health care, that issue which weighs most heavily on the minds of Ontarians today, because nowhere has Mike Harris's short-sighted approach been more painful than when it comes to health care.

Health care has never been a priority for Mike Harris. It wasn't a priority at the time of the last election and it obviously is not a priority for him in government. That's why health care became one of Mike Harris's favourite targets for cuts. He cut \$870 million from our hospitals after promising not to take a cent from our health care. He ordered the closure of one out of every five hospitals after promising not to close hospitals. He fired thousands of nurses, leaving Ontario with the fewest nurses per capita in the country. He forced more and more patients to go to the US or turn to private companies for everything from basic medical care to their cancer treatment. Mike Harris did this, and nobody over there, not a single person on that side of the House, was willing to stand up to him and say, "This is wrong, this is short-sighted, people are going to hurt."

Mike Harris has quite obviously failed the people of Ontario by undermining their health care. He's destroyed

the morale of health care workers by taking away the resources they need to meet patient needs. He's hurt everyone involved in health care, but especially the sick, seniors and our most vulnerable.

1520

When I launched our 20/20 Plan, I travelled to Hamilton and I launched our plan on the steps of a hospital. I did so because I'd learned of the story of a Hamilton man, 87 years of age, who just a couple of weeks ago had been hospitalized there, only he found that there was no bed available for him. So for two and a half days he spent his time on a stretcher in a busy, bustling emergency ward. He died on that bed. His two daughters were with him at the time and they grieved at their loss, separated from that busy, bustling emergency ward and everything that was taking on there by nothing more than a flimsy, rose-coloured curtain.

That man, that father, that grandfather, he'd paid a lot of taxes over the years, played by all the rules and struggled to raise his family. He'd paid for that bed, and that bed should have been there for him.

Do you know what Mike Harris was doing? He was spending 100 million taxpayer dollars on a self-promotion campaign. He was looking after his interests. He was doing whatever he could to have himself re-elected as Premier of Ontario.

If there is no other reason why the people of this province should be rejecting Mike Harris in his bid to become Premier once again, that story in and of itself ought to be enough.

We're going to put health care back on a solid footing in Ontario, and that means health care that's there for everyone who needs it and not just those wealthy enough to buy it. That's what it means to be Canadian and we won't let Mike Harris or anybody else take that away from us.

Our 20/20 Plan for health care starts with guaranteed standards that clearly spell out what you can count on, and we're going to deliver on those standards with strategic investments and innovations in health care. We'll back those standards up by making quality health care the law for everybody. For the first time, people will know exactly what they can count on when they need health care services. That, just so everybody understands it, is without precedent in Canada. We are putting into place standards so that people will know exactly what it is they will be able to count on when it comes to having their health care needs met in Ontario.

Let me tell you about some of those standards. I'm reading from our 20/20 Plan:

"Patients in life-threatening situations will get the emergency care they need. Ambulance crews will know where to go to get the care the patient needs, and when they get to the emergency room, it will be staffed and equipped to provide immediate medical attention.

"No one will wait more than 15 minutes to be assessed in an emergency room.

"Patients who need to stay in hospital will be admitted to a room. They will not be abandoned on stretchers in emergency room hallways" or in hospital corridors.

"Patients will get the right care in the right setting. Patient care will never be downgraded to save money....

"No cancer patient will wait more than four weeks for radiation treatment."

I had a young man in my constituency office about two and a half months ago and he came to tell me the story about his mother — early 70s. She'd been diagnosed with breast cancer. The doctor told her that, in keeping with the clinical guidelines, she should begin radiation in four weeks' time, but he had been told by the authorities that she wouldn't be able to get her radiation until close to the 16- or 17-week mark.

This young man told me about how heavily this weighed on the family's mind and how important it was to all of them to be able to get that treatment at the earliest possible opportunity. We speak to that family and we speak to all Ontario families, and we're telling them we're putting in place a standard that says you'll get your radiation treatment within four weeks, and you can count on that.

We're telling Ontarians that the number of nurses per person in Ontario will never again fall below the Canadian average. We're telling Ontarians that patients will be assessed prior to leaving hospital, and where home care is needed we'll make sure that it's provided.

As I said earlier, these brand-new Ontario standards will be backed by law.

In our 20/20 Plan, we commit to passing a new Ontario Patient Protection Act. It's going to ensure that these standards are publicly available and enforced.

We will be the first province ever to have something we're calling a health quality auditor reporting directly to the public. People understand the concept of a financial auditor, someone who takes a look at the province's books. We're introducing a health quality auditor, and we're going to give this person the power to inspect health care facilities, like our hospitals, and report on compliance with our new standards.

Our Patient Protection Act will also ensure that we in government will have the power, if need be, to intervene and make the necessary changes if any facility consistently fails to meet the standards. So not only are we putting new standards in place, we will monitor regularly to make sure that we are meeting those standards, that we're complying with those standards, and if somebody or something is failing to live up to those standards, for whatever reason, then we'll take whatever action is necessary to make sure those standards are being met.

Our 20/20 Plan also spells out what we as a government will do to meet those standards. In particular, these are the following things we'll do to meet our new standards. First of all, we're going to stabilize the hospital system by setting out minimum funding levels for the next five years. That may not seem like much at first blush, but I can tell you that in talking to hospital administrators and doctors and nurses who work there, they tell me on an ongoing basis, "If I could just know that there'll be specific funding available, I'll be able to

plan accordingly to ensure that we're best using our resources to meet the needs of our patients." That's exactly what we intend to do.

We're going to hire 10,200 nurses, bringing the number of nurses per capita in Ontario up to the national average. In passing, it is worth reminding Ontario voters that Mike Harris spent \$400 million firing thousands and thousands of Ontario nurses, and more recently he tells us he's going to spend \$375 million to hire these same nurses back.

We're going to bring doctors to communities that need them. There are many, in fact dozens, of underserved communities today in Ontario. We're going to help those communities by covering the cost of tuition for medical students who agree to practise for five years in underserved areas, and we're going to make it mandatory for medical schools to offer training in the underserved areas. We're going to deal with our growing doctor shortage that we're facing here in Ontario by increasing the number of medical school graduates by 15%. We're going to provide significant new funding for home care and long-term care.

We're going to help people care for seriously ill family members by passing a Family Medical Leave Act. This is going to provide up to 12 weeks of job-protected, unpaid leave to employees. Recently, I saw a woman on television here in Ontario, who I believe was from Cornwall, who approached her employer and said: "My father's coming home to die. I need to take some time off to be with him." The employer said: "Thank you very much. Here's your pink slip." We're going to change that. We don't think Ontario employees should have to choose between the job they need and the family they love.

We're going to reopen Women's College Hospital and the Montfort Hospital. These two hospitals are of unique province-wide significance. Women's College has been a world leader in providing health care to women, and the Montfort is the province's only French-language teaching hospital. We're going to work with local communities to review their health care needs, including their hospital requirements, through the year 2020, the peak of the aging baby boom. We will not be bound by the recommendations of the Health Services Restructuring Commission because the short-sighted Harris government asked it to review our needs only through the year 2003.

1530

Think of this for a minute: There are 11 million health care users in our province. Mike Harris put in place a hospital restructuring plan that takes into account our hospital needs through to the year 2003. So what if one of us needs a hospital in the year 2004 or 2007? It seems to me that a responsible government, a far-sighted government, a government that looked beyond the next election and considered the needs of the next generation, would understand the value of having a hospital plan in place that ensures that our long-term needs, when it comes to hospitals, will be met.

One of the things we have found in our many discussions with health care professionals and Ontarians is that there has been a huge growth in the appetite for information about how to keep yourself healthy and, if you're sick, how to make yourself better. They're also looking for convenience when it comes to accessing that information. So we make a specific commitment in here to make health care information more accessible by setting up a 24-hour 1-800-TEL-CARE line and a Web site. A team of nurses, backed by a supervising doctor, will answer questions received by telephone, e-mail or on the Internet.

We're also going to make a personal health care plan available to every Ontarian who wants one. We're going to allow our doctors to take a patient's family history, lifestyle and health care needs. We're going to allow them to create a plan for individual Ontarians that will tell them how to stay healthy, which will help us all save health care resources.

Finally, we're going to make CPR training mandatory in Ontario high schools, providing life-saving training to another 100,000 people each and every year. I want to tell you — and I say this with a great deal of pride — that our 20/20 Plan for health care is bold, it's aggressive, it's ambitious, but it is nothing less than absolutely essential. It's essential because it's exactly what needs to be done if we're going to provide health care that Ontarians can truly count on.

I want to tell you about education and what's happened to it during the past four years. After four years of cuts, school closures and instability, Ontarians don't know what to expect today from our schools. As a result, more and more parents are being forced to turn to private schools, where enrolment is up 15%. More and more teachers are so demoralized that they are leaving the profession in droves. The last four years have seen Mike Harris attack our teachers and attack our schools. He cut \$1 billion from our schools after promising not to take one cent out of classroom education. He slashed special education, adult education and English-as-a-second-language programs. He continues to threaten hundreds of schools right across our province with closure because of his disastrous funding formula.

Mike Harris did all of this and not a single person on that side of the House bothered to stand up to him, bothered to tell him that this is wrong, this is short-sighted, this is going to hurt our kids and in the long term it's going to hurt our province.

It's always important to remember what it is that we're talking about when we're talking about education, the education of our children. We're talking about our future ability to compete and win. If we lose public education, the vast majority of our children will lose the best chance they could ever have at success.

If people on that side of the House have lost sight, as they apparently have, of the implicit value of public education in the lives of Ontario families, I'd ask them to ask themselves this: How many of them would be

enjoying the quality of life that they lead today if their parents had had to pay for private education?

Our 20/20 plan for education lays out what we'll do to ensure that we've got the best schools, the best teachers and the best opportunities to learn for our children.

Specifically, these are some of the things that we're going to be doing. First of all, we're going to ensure that our schools have the resources they need by investing in public education. We're going to get Queen's Park and school boards out of the school-closing business for a change. We're going to scrap the short-sighted funding formula that fails to take into account what a school really means to a community.

We've got a plan to modernize our schools. Just for a change, instead of attacking our schools, we're going to modernize. We're going to provide 24,000 new computers to classrooms during each and every year of our mandate. That's 2,000 new computers every month. That means each and every school will receive five new computers every year.

We're going to keep our computer labs open before and after school. We're going to require that every school has a Web site. We're going to include electronic commerce and Internet site design in our high school business courses. We're going to require every high school student to complete a course in computer science.

We're going to stop the fighting. Students learn best in a stable environment. We're going to get the best out of our partners in education by working with them.

We're going to ensure that our students are safe by establishing safe school zones. Anyone convicted of carrying a weapon or dealing drugs near one of our schools will be subject to a new provincial penalty of up to two years in prison. It seems to me that one of the fundamental rights that ought to be enjoyed by Ontario children is the right to go to school without fear.

You know what else we're going to do? We are going to work with publishers to develop something without precedent in North America. We're going to develop the biggest and best school library in Canada, completely digitized. It will be available for the use of students, staff and the public.

In order to ensure that every child and every Ontarian is given the opportunity to learn, our government is going to restore the funding that Mike Harris cut from adult education, special education and English as a second language.

While I'm very proud to announce that we're going to be fixing the things that Mike Harris has broken, I also know that if we're going to compete and win we're also going to have to lift the bar higher and do more than has ever been done before.

Providing students with extra help is one of the areas where we're going to be doing more than ever before. Ontario parents should not have to pay private tutors to do what their tax dollars should be doing, and that's why our 20/20 Plan is going to give school boards the funding they need to offer additional tutoring and remedial programs in the evenings and on weekends.

Ontarians will know that Mike Harris and his American campaign advisers are currently filling the airwaves with attack ads. One of those claims that I'm against greater accountability in our schools. I know that Mike Harris doesn't want to let the facts get in the way of a good story, but let me be clear: I support greater accountability in our schools. In fact, our 20/20 Plan details a plan for real accountability in our schools.

1540

We all know that Mike Harris has done a lot of fighting with Ontario's teachers, and every time he does this, our kids pay the price. We are simply never going to bring the best out in our kids unless we get the best out of our teachers.

I know that all Ontarians — and I say this without reservation — want teachers in their classrooms who are motivated, inspired and dedicated. So I think it's important to ask ourselves, "How effective has Premier Mike Harris truly been in ensuring that our teachers are motivated, in ensuring that our teachers are inspired and in ensuring that our teachers continually rededicate themselves to a truly honourable profession?"

The fact of the matter is that Mike Harris has been an abysmal failure at bringing the best out in Ontario teachers, and our kids are paying the price. Because our kids need, deserve and, I would say, have the right to teachers who are inspired, dedicated and motivated.

When we're talking about accountability, it's telling that Mike Harris cut \$1 billion from our schools, but when it came time to be accountable for the ensuing crisis he washed his hands. Mike Harris's funding formula is going to cause the closure of hundreds of schools across the province, but when it comes time to accept responsibility for those decisions, again he washes his hands.

Our 20/20 Plan for education provides real accountability in our schools. First of all, we're going to give our parents more information on what their kids are learning. We're going to require that our new teachers pass certification exams. But unlike Mike Harris, we will treat teachers the same way we treat other professionals — as nothing less and nothing more. So just in the same way that lawyers, doctors, accountants, engineers, architects and many others are required to pass province-wide certification examinations at the beginning of their careers, so will Ontario teachers. In addition, we are going to, on an ongoing basis, provide additional funding for in-service training for our teachers.

Continuing on this line of real accountability, we are also going to issue report cards for each school. The report card is going to inform parents and teachers how each school is faring on something we call a quality index. That includes programs, supplies, what kinds of innovations are taking place inside that school, how many computers are available there to the students, what kind of extra help is available to the students and, of course, the results of the standardized testing.

The goal here, by using this quality index, is to give educators and parents the real information that they need

to improve their schools, instead of giving talk show hosts a few tidbits they can use to embarrass schools. Unlike Mike Harris, we understand that accountability is a two-way street, and our government will be accountable when it comes to education. We will invite the existing Education Quality and Accountability Office to test the government's approach to education and report on how we are doing and where we need to improve.

It's important to understand how significant this is. We are asking an independent third party to assess for the first time ever how the Ontario government is doing in supporting publicly funded education. That is real accountability and I can tell you that the thought of this kind of accountability absolutely terrifies this government. Mike Harris wants teachers, trustees and students tested and assessed on a regular basis, but there is no way that he will ever subject himself to an assessment by an independent third party that will tell us how well he is doing and how well his government is doing in supporting publicly funded education in our province. Again, that's real accountability.

Let me speak to the issue of colleges and universities. I think most people understand today that in the new economy you can only earn if you learn. The new jobs will only go to those who are the best educated and the most highly skilled. After four years of Mike Harris, parents and students are paying more for less in Ontario's colleges and universities. Mike Harris raised tuition fees by more than 60%. Today, Ontario is the most expensive place in Canada to get a post-secondary education.

I liked the old rules that you and I played by, Madam Speaker, and that everybody sitting in this Legislature played by. Under the old rules, you had to have good marks and you had to work hard. If you had those two things, you were able to go on to college or university. Under the Mike Harris rules, you need good marks, you need to work hard and you've got to have wealthy parents. Mike Harris is rejecting the good example of the generations that came before us, those who acted both in enlightened self-interest and through a generosity of spirit and made sure that the younger generation could find success in our province by keeping the doors to our colleges and universities open and affordable to them.

Mike Harris cut \$400 million from our colleges and universities. Today, Ontario ranks last in Canada in per capita funding for post-secondary education. What Mike Harris doesn't understand is that in a knowledge-based economy, the real economic engine is the individual, a highly skilled and educated person; and he doesn't understand that our colleges and universities enable our young people to become highly skilled and educated. So when Mike Harris starves our colleges and universities for funding and when he drives tuition fees through the roof, he's robbing us of our ability to enjoy lasting economic success in Ontario. Quite simply, he's robbing us of our ability to compete.

Our 20/20 Plan outlines our plans to provide quality college and university education that's affordable, accessible and accountable. I want to speak to you about

some of the specifics that are found in our 20/20 Plan. First of all, we talk about our four-point plan to tear down the barriers to higher education. We'll do the following four things.

We will immediately cut tuition fees by 10%. We will re-regulate tuition fees for professional programs. It's \$44,000 today in Ontario to become a doctor, tuition alone. It's \$55,000 to become a dentist in Ontario today, tuition alone. We're going to restore student aid for part-time students who've been cut off by the Harris government. The fastest-growing group of students in Ontario today are part-time students. Mike Harris likes to talk the talk. His government likes to talk the talk when it comes to long-life learning and breaking down the barriers, but that's never really going to happen unless we ensure that those who are studying part time have access to student aid. We're going to allow working students to earn up to \$1,800 during the school year without having their student aid deducted.

We also understand that last place is simply not good enough for Ontario. So we're going to increase our investment in post-secondary education to meet the national average within five years. New college and university funding will be targeted at programs that are going to prepare Ontario for the social and economic challenges of the next 20 years. I'm making a bargain with our colleges and universities. I understand that they are in need of funding. I will send funding over, but there will be ropes attached. We have certain needs that have to be met in Ontario today, and I know that our colleges and universities can help us fulfill those needs.

1550

When we talk about accountability at the post-secondary level, we're really talking here about better information so that our young people will be able to make more informed choices. We're going to issue report cards on college and university programs so students and their parents can make informed choices. Those report cards will tell you whether the courses are taught by a professor or a teaching assistant, how large the classes are, how many students from that program have found employment and how many have been accepted into graduate school. We'll also tell you which universities' programs rank among the top in the province.

Our 20/20 Plan is going to make these investments in our colleges and universities because our goal is to make Ontario's economy the most productive in North America. We understand that a strong economy is what provides high quality of life, including quality health care and quality education. But unlike the Mike Harris government, we know that a strong economy is only possible when you invest in people.

If you look around the world and you examine those jurisdictions which enjoy sustained economic prosperity, there is a common thread that runs through each and every one of them. The common thread is as follows in those jurisdictions: They invest in their people by giving them the best possible education. They invest in the health care of their people. They make sure their people

have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink, and they make an ongoing effort to minimize the gap between the haves and the have-nots. Those lessons are there now. There is no real magic to this stuff. What you've got to begin with is a responsible fiscal plan in order to effect, in order to achieve, that kind of an ideal.

We've got a balanced, responsible fiscal plan that does the right things in the right order. It calls for immediate investments in the education and health of our people, a balanced budget and then tax relief as the economy grows.

Compare our 20/20 Plan with what Mike Harris has done. Mike Harris cut health care and education, he has never balanced a budget and he borrowed every cent of his tax cut, adding over \$10 billion to the province's debt. What's worse is that Mike Harris really didn't cut taxes. He shifted them. He shifted them on to property taxpayers when he downloaded more than \$700 million in services on to local property taxpayers, and he shifted taxes on to our young people, our students, in the form of higher tuition. He shifted them on to our kids, because he added \$23 billion to our province's long-term debt.

I am convinced that as more and more Ontarians begin to understand that Mike Harris went to international markets and borrowed \$10 billion to give today's adults a tax cut, and when they understand what this means to our children, they will condemn this Premier as being selfish and irresponsible.

I can tell you that our 20/20 Plan offers the right approach to our finances in the right order. This is what we'll do. We will immediately invest an additional \$2.5 billion a year in our priorities. That includes \$2.1 billion in health care and education and \$400 million in priority areas, which include environmental protection, help for the homeless and getting kids off to the best possible start. Not one cent of this money will come from your pocket in higher taxes. Not one cent will be borrowed. It will come from increased transfers from the federal government and money that we've identified in the current provincial budget, including money now wasted on high-priced consultants and partisan advertising.

It may be that the Conservative members of this government feel that 100 million taxpayer dollars spent on a campaign strategy, on a self-promotion program in a virtual orgy of advertising that we've had to witness in this province for the last two years is an appropriate expenditure of government money, but I can tell you that Ontarians would far prefer that that money be invested in their health care and in their education.

As the economy grows, additional revenues will be used first of all to balance the budget. You should understand that our province is on track, as Mike Harris likes to say, to be the last province in the Dominion to balance our budget. Just imagine the jokes they're telling in Newfoundland tonight about Ontario and how far behind we are when it comes to making real fiscal responsibility the order of the day here.

Once we have balanced the budget, the new revenues will be split in three ways: 55% will be devoted to our

priorities, which will be primarily health care and education; 25% will be for tax relief aimed at lower- and middle-income Ontarians to help them start to catch up. But I want to emphasize again that we won't borrow money to give Ontarians a tax cut. We won't run a deficit to give Ontarians a tax cut, because to do so would be fiscally irresponsible. The final 20% of the fiscal dividend will be spent on debt reduction and a rainy day fund to ensure that health care and education are protected both in good times and in bad.

We'll shortly be going into a campaign, and our message to Ontarians again quite simply is that we're going to give them two things that they'll be able to count on: They'll be able to count on quality universal health care and quality publicly funded education.

I want Ontarians to know today that if they've got to take their 87-year-old father to the hospital they can count on a bed being there for him. And if parents of a four-year-old baby girl say, "We need special care for our daughter," I'm telling them, "You'll be able to count on that care." If somebody says, "My wife, my sister, my mother has breast cancer," we're saying, "You'll be able to count on radiation treatment at the four-week mark, in keeping with provincial guidelines."

We're also telling Ontarians that they'll be able to count on junior kindergarten. If you've got a four-year-old in the family or shortly will have a four-year-old, every community in our province is going to offer junior kindergarten. You can count on that.

If the school psychologist steps up to you one day and says, "Your child has a learning disability and your child needs special education," we are here as Liberals to say, "You'll be able to count on quality special education in your community."

We're telling Ontarians they'll also be able to count on teachers who are feeling motivated and inspired to be at their best.

We're telling all of Ontario's young people that we're going to start to turn the corner when it comes to colleges and universities and that they'll be able to count on affordable post-secondary education in our province.

1600

In a nutshell, that's what our 20/20 Plan is all about: giving Ontarians health care they can count on and education they can count on. That's what we Liberals are all about. That's what this election is all about. We're looking forward to the campaign. We're looking forward to taking Ontario in a new direction, one whose future is bright not just for a few of us, but for all of us.

Speaker, I move the following:

That the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by adding the following thereto:

"This House profoundly regrets that the Mike Harris government has acted on an agenda that has created a crisis in health care and education and threatens our economic future, and condemns the government for the following: breaking its promises in health care by cutting \$870 million from our hospitals; closing one out of every

five hospitals and imposing \$300 million worth of new user fees; hurting patient care by turning our emergency rooms into waiting rooms, firing nurses until Ontario has the fewest nurses per capita in the country, and forcing more and more patients to go to the US or turn to private companies for everything from basic medical care to cancer treatment; breaking its promises in education by cutting \$1 billion from our schools after promising not to take one cent out of classroom education; hurting our children and students by closing schools, slashing special education and English-as-a-second-language programs, forcing more and more parents to turn to private school, where enrolment is up 15%, and raising tuition fees by more than 60% to make Ontario the most expensive place in Canada to get a post-secondary education; and finally, by threatening our economic future through increasing property taxes and introducing new user fees, failing to balance the budget time and time again, and adding \$22 billion to the provincial debt, raising the provincial debt in our province to over \$110 billion."

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Order, please.

Mr McGuinty has moved that the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session be amended by adding the following thereto:

Interjection: Dispense.

The Acting Speaker: Dispense?

Interjection: No.

The Acting Speaker: "This House profoundly regrets that the Mike Harris government has acted on an agenda that has created a crisis in health care and education and threatens our economic future, and condemns the government for: breaking its promises in health care by cutting \$870 million from our hospitals; closing one out of every five hospitals and imposing \$300 million worth of new user fees; hurting patient care by turning our emergency rooms into waiting rooms, firing nurses until Ontario has the fewest nurses per capita in the country, and forcing more and more patients to go to the US or turn to private companies for everything from basic medical care to cancer treatment; breaking its promise in education by cutting \$1 billion from our schools after promising not to take one cent out of classroom education; hurting our children and students by closing schools, slashing special education and English-as-a-second-language programs, forcing more and more parents to turn to private school, where enrolment is up 15%, and raising tuition fees by more than 60% to make Ontario the most expensive place in Canada to get a post-secondary education; threatening our economic future by increasing property taxes and introducing new user fees, failing to balance the budget, and adding \$22 billion to the provincial debt to raise the total provincial debt to over \$110 billion."

Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 26, the debate is adjourned and the House is adjourned until 6:30 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1605.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Soins de longue durée, ministre délégué aux affaires des personnes âgées	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)
Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadson, Gary L. (PC)
Don Mills	Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamarie (L)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Durham West / -Ouest	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	London North / -Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Eglinton	Saunderson, William (PC)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Children's Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (enfance)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Speaker / Président	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L)		
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)	Sarnia	Boushy, Dave (PC)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)
Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Nickel Belt	Morin, Blain K. (NDP)	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Scarborough-Ellesmere	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Oriole	Caplan, David (L)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Victoria-Haliburton	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, président du Conseil de gestion
Ottawa West / -Ouest	Cullen, Alex (ND)	Waterloo North / -Nord	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Parry Sound	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Willowdale	Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Windsor-Riverside	Lessard, Wayne (ND)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	York Centre / -Centre	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	York Mills	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Hon / L'hon Isabel (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)		
St George-St David	Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Government
Publications



No. 3B

N° 3B

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 27 April 1999

Mardi 27 avril 1999



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 27 April 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 27 avril 1999

The House met at 1830.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs Marion Boyd): Member for Prescott-Russell, you have some time remaining.

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell): Pour faire suite à mon allocution de hier soir, je dois dire que ma position n'est pas pour maîtriser les travailleurs québécois. Je veux simplement dire que nous avons un gouvernement qui n'a pas pris la position qu'il aurait dû prendre il y a maintenant au-delà de trois ans et demi.

Lorsque le projet de loi 60 est approuvé à l'unanimité dans cette Chambre, le gouvernement Harris a décidé de mettre le projet de loi de côté, et nous voilà rendus à la veille d'une élection provinciale et puis le gouvernement Harris décide de revenir avec ce projet de loi, qu'on va appeler un autre projet de loi, mais juste pour dire qu'on ne l'appelle pas «projet de loi 60».

Le gouvernement Mike Harris est au courant du problème depuis plus de 30 ans, puisqu'il l'a déjà mentionné dans son discours du trône de jeudi dernier. Je pourrais même dire que M. le premier ministre a été mis au courant et le ministre du Travail a bel et bien été mis au courant après que nous avons eu des audiences publiques qui ont eu lieu à Ottawa le 1^{er} juin 1998. Ils étaient présents à l'audience publique. Nous avions du gouvernement conservateur le député de Niagara Falls, Bart Maves, qui était là; nous avons même Wayne Lessard, le député de Windsor-Riverside; Bernard Grandmaître, le député d'Ottawa-Est; et Richard Patten d'Ottawa-Centre. Il était aussi représenté par deux représentants du gouvernement du Québec de l'Assemblée nationale, dont M^{me} Claire Vaive, la députée libérale de Gatineau, ainsi que François Beaulne, le vice-président de la Chambre de l'Assemblée nationale.

Même si nous étions au courant qu'on avait un problème, je crois que le premier ministre devrait reconnaître qu'il y a eu une erreur lors des négociations en 1996. Je me rappelle lors de la rencontre à Ottawa avec la ministre du temps, M^{me} Witmer, elle avait crié victoire

avec plusieurs entrepreneurs en construction d'Ottawa. Elle avait dit que nous étions finalement parvenus à une entente, une entente qui ne voulait rien dire parce qu'elle avait été finalisée par téléphone, dont le premier ministre a fait l'annonce officielle le 6 décembre 1996. Mais encore là aujourd'hui, le premier ministre lui-même a dit que nous avons failli — nous ne nous sommes pas tenus à cette entente.

Quelle était l'entente du temps? Je ne le sais pas parce que, si on regarde dans le fond de tout ça, il est impossible. Mais il faut dire que, actuellement, les problèmes persistent au Québec. Aussi récemment que la semaine dernière, Hydro-Québec a demandé des soumissions à des entrepreneurs, mais c'était bel et bien écrit : «Admissibilité : les soumissionnaires doivent avoir leur principal établissement au Québec.»

Encore là, est-ce que le Québec veut négocier de bonne foi? Je ne le crois pas. J'ai aussi demandé au gouvernement de penser à une zone tampon. Le tout aurait l'air d'être acceptable, mais nous avons décidé de le mettre de côté. J'ai fait parvenir une lettre au ministre des Finances, l'honorable M. Ernie Eves, le 26 juin 1996, qui a mentionné que nous perdions au-delà de 200 \$ millions de revenu par année. Il a dit à ce temps-là qu'il était pour voir le tout. Le gouvernement dialogue avec la province de Québec à ce sujet. Qu'est-il devenu depuis le 26 juin 1996? Je ne peux pas voir ce qu'on a fait jusqu'à la dernière minute du mois de décembre.

J'ai aussi fait circuler un pamphlet où on mentionnait au public d'avertir le gouvernement ou le bureau de la taxation de l'Ontario. Voici le pamphlet qui a été distribué de ma part au mois de décembre 1998.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I just want to commend the member for some of his commentary on the track record of the Harris government, particularly where it concerns their involvement in some of the difficulties that present and have presented over the last few years.

At the end of his speech he was talking about the negotiations with Quebec. It seems to me that this government is very good when it comes to using the big hammer, when it comes to targetting somebody who is not playing the game according to the rules they set and then taking an axe to a situation that requires some very sensitive and intelligent negotiations and using that beating up of some group or some individual to some political advantage for themselves.

We've had example after example in this province over the last four years of this government using that

tactic over and over again. The very first one of that, of course, was the attack this government made almost immediately on being elected on those most vulnerable and most marginalized and the poorest among us, the 21.6% that they announced in June 1995 they were going to take away from those who have had the least income coming in, those who were working hardest and finding it most difficult to put food on the table for their children. That set the tone; that set the pattern. That was the beginning of a program by this government to take a baseball bat to anybody who had the intestinal fortitude to stand up and challenge them, and I think the member who just spoke shared with us a perfect example of that.

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): I would just like to make a few comments and congratulate the member for Prescott-Russell on getting the bill in order and getting it passed in this House when he did. I know he had spoken on it.

I think it is known as your bill. Everyone in the House supported it, and I congratulate you for that. I'm sorry that it took the government so long to bring the bill forward, a copy of your bill. I know it has been a big issue in my riding and yours and in many parts of Ontario for a long period of time. We had talked a bit earlier, back a few years ago, and I congratulate you. I just hope that this bill continues on and is passed before we go to the polls, because it's a big issue and I think all the residents of my community and your community want is a level playing field, what's good for both provinces. We ask no more.

It may not be as big an issue sometimes as it is right now that many are coming into the area, and back a number of years ago that happened. I think it's great that it is brought before the House, and I hope it is brought back to the House and that it gets all the readings, hopefully, one day. I'm sure everyone will support it just the same as they did your bill.

Once again, congratulations to the member for Prescott-Russell. You've got the whole ball rolling, and it's known in our area as your bill.

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): I just want to make a few comments with respect to the member for Prescott-Russell's remarks regarding the throne speech.

I too live in a border area, but the border is with the state of Michigan. We don't have the same problems that the member for Prescott-Russell has with respect to the cross-border movement of construction workers primarily between the province of Ontario and the province of Quebec. I understand that that is a problem in the member's riding, one on which I had the opportunity of attending a meeting in Ottawa to discuss matters to try to resolve that issue. There were representatives of the Quebec government there, and there were representatives of the construction industry in Ontario and in Quebec. But instead of addressing some of the concerns that were raised and some of the solutions that were offered at that meeting, we have the Premier coming in with the heavy-

hammer, heavy-hitting approach that is described in the throne speech.

Today I received a letter from the building and construction trades department of the AFL-CIO which I think is relevant to this issue as well. It's a letter to the Premier, and it says, "Instead of catering to non-union contractors and right-to-work groups by precipitous retaliatory actions and proposed legislation announced by your government to deal with interprovincial mobility for construction workers, we would urge you to look carefully at existing proposals originating from all the major stakeholders in the construction industry."

This seems to be a reasonable approach. Rather than demanding that the Quebec government lower their standards and water down the regulatory environment, we should be trying to raise those standards.

1840

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): I rise to congratulate my colleague Jean-Marc Lalonde on his fine presentation, particularly his comments in regard to the situation of labour mobility along the Quebec-Ontario border.

This is a problem that has been plaguing Ontario-Quebec relations for some time. Mr Lalonde brought this to the attention of the House back in 1995. He managed to have all parties agree to take action back in 1995, and we on this side are a little perplexed at the government's inaction over that period.

This is about making sure that we break down barriers between provinces for labour mobility. That means Ontario workers should have the same access into Quebec as Quebec workers have into Ontario. I think that's totally reasonable. Along the border in northeastern Ontario and in eastern Ontario this has been a problem, which Mr Lalonde deserves full credit for bringing to the attention of this House most forcefully.

With that, I just want to congratulate my colleague for showing great leadership on this issue.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Lalonde: First of all, I'd like to say thank you to all my colleagues who recognize the points I have brought to their attention.

I was just referring to some of the cuts that this government has made since their election in 1995. We wouldn't be in the position we are in right now if the government had not fired the inspectors we have in eastern Ontario, especially in northern Ontario, because there is a tax guide that exists that the government could have put in place and followed. It's tax guide 804. It's really clear that any construction company coming in from Quebec or from outside the province should, first of all, register with the Ontario registration office or the tax office. If not registered, they have to deposit 4% of the total value of the contract, which hasn't been done. They had to pay taxes on all the equipment they brought in from outside the province. That hasn't been done.

Ever since I published this little pamphlet on December 12, 1998, the tax office in Oshawa has been getting a lot of calls. Nothing can be done even at that,

because we are reporting the people from outside the province who are coming in. It doesn't give any chance to our local contractors, because we cannot compete with them since they're not adding up the 8% taxes.

It just shows you that this government has not done their job. We lost over \$200 million in tax revenue, for which this government is responsible, because they fired the inspectors who were doing the job on construction sites.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate.

Mr Martin: Yesterday I had the pleasure and good fortune of being in the wonderful community of Elliot Lake. I was there for the funeral of long-time New Democrat Wilma Sanderson, who served that community well over a long period of time, both from a political sense and also from a recreational-cultural sense, a woman who saw the value in community and building community and being part of that and the contribution that community, when it's well run and well done, can make to the quality of life of everybody who calls that particular place home.

It was interesting being in Elliot Lake because it's a community that has gone through some very difficult times over the last five to 10 years because of the change in the way they make a living there, the change in the economy, the closing down primarily of the mines that used to support Elliot Lake and actually a good chunk of the township of the North Shore. They went through some really difficult times, yet you go there today — and back when they were going through those difficult times, there were lots of naysayers around who suggested that Elliot Lake's days were numbered, that there wasn't much of a future there. The prices of houses went down, and all of the things that happen to a community that's in decline were evident in that town.

We happened to be the government of the day when all that was happening. When I speak of "we," I mean the New Democratic Party under the leadership of Bob Rae. Shelley Martel was the Minister of Northern Development and Mines at the time.

I remember, because I was a northern member at that time — part of a northern caucus — the conversations, discussions and meetings that happened in Elliot Lake, in Sudbury and in other places of northern Ontario, and down here with the leadership group of that community, to try to figure out what we could do to put that community in a position where it could take advantage of other opportunities to create a new economy and change in a way that would see everybody who chose to stay in that town — because it's a very wonderful little town. Anybody who has had the privilege of visiting there will know that there's a lot of energy, a lot of excitement, a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of really wonderful people who live in the town of Elliot Lake.

Mike Brown will know of what I speak because he's the member who represents that community right now. It's a wonderful little community with a lot of really fine people and a lot of really good things happening there.

As a government we sat down and looked at all the possibilities, all the pluses and all the negatives. We looked at various scenarios and eventually came to a point where it was decided that what was probably needed most was for Elliot Lake to be able to access a fund that was properly managed, responsible and accountable to explore the possibility of new industry.

One of the biggest industries, of course, that they decided to go ahead with was the development of a seniors' retirement centre. They would take some of the very excellent stock of good housing and put it on the market to senior citizens, retired people, who would come to northern Ontario to experience the quality of life that one experiences in northern Ontario if you live in the outdoors with fresh air and clean water at your doorstep etc. They accessed money from that fund to market that, to put in place some of the infrastructure that would be necessary to support that kind of effort. That's taking off. They're not there yet. I suggest they'll probably always be sort of turning the next corner, trying to figure out, "OK, what do we do next and how do we take care of this particular challenge that presents itself?" But it's exciting to hear them talk of the process and the program.

I know, from having participated myself in some discussions in my own community about how we might diversify the economy of Sault Ste Marie, some of the stories that are beginning to emanate out of that little town of Elliot Lake. Some of the people there have come up with some very exciting ideas, using their own talent, using talent that they've been able to attract or learn about and start some new industry that has the potential to really take off.

There's a new company there now that specializes in glass, in taking glass and making sort of plaques and different fancy windows and that kind of thing. They are getting some very lucrative contracts with some big corporations to provide goods and are doing quite well and have the potential to do even better. I was surprised as I drove in yesterday to Elliot Lake to see how much work is being done actually on the highway.

The government of the day will take some credit for the work that's going on to make that highway finally, after, I don't know, 20 or 30 years, straight in places where it should perhaps have been straightened out long ago, but the reason you're able to justify doing the very expensive work on that highway is because this community has found a way to breathe new life into its economy. It's been able to breathe new life into its economy because there was some really important and good work done five or eight years ago, when the economy of that community was in big trouble, where the community came together with the workers and with government to set out a plan and put in place a fund that they could access so they could actually diversify and find some new ways to create work and have some money flow.

1850

I present that story this evening in this place for a couple of reasons; First of all, because I was so enthralled and taken aback by the energy that still is there in Elliot

Lake, but more importantly, to juxtapose what happened there under the tutelage and guidance and leadership of a government that believes in itself, of a government that believes it has a role to play, of a government that believes it should intervene and be a major partner at the table when a particular group of people or community or area of the province is experiencing difficulty and lend some leadership and bring some resources and give some help and believe in the potential that's there and actually have the courage to invest in that.

I dare say, and Mr Brown will probably agree with me when I say this, that if the present Harris government had been in place in the early 1990s when Elliot Lake was experiencing the difficulties they experienced back then and if they took the laissez-faire approach that they've taken to almost everything else that's happened in this province over the last four years, Elliot Lake would today be another example of a mining ghost town, with shafts sticking up into the air, with empty homes, with a few people left wandering around trying to figure out how to make the payment at the end of the month. Most of those people would probably have moved to the bigger centres, to create the kind of difficult problems we're beginning to see happen around the Toronto area with transportation and environmental problems etc, but they didn't.

Because the government of the day in the early 1990s saw potential in Elliot Lake even though it was experiencing some difficulties, believed in the people of that community, brought to the table the leadership of the community, came to the table themselves with some resources and some ideas and were willing to invest in that community in a major way, we have a community today that's taking off again.

The Acting Speaker: Order. May I ask those who are having conversations in the room to remember that the member has the floor and that it's very difficult for me, as Speaker, to hear him and I'm sure it's difficult for all of you to hear him. Member for Sault Ste Marie.

Mr Martin: We had presented in this House last week, on Thursday, a speech from the throne that many of us came to hear with some anticipation that perhaps it was going to be a blueprint for the next five or 10 or 15 years of further development for the province. But, alas, we were disappointed.

It was, as some have said to me, a bit of a snoozer. There was nothing in it that grabbed the imagination of anybody. There was nothing in it to spur one on to say: "OK, I want to be part of that. That's the province I want to be active in and participate in and invest in." It didn't do any of that and in fact it should have. But then, again, it shouldn't surprise us because this government has shown itself over the last four years to be bereft of any real, creative, exciting or innovative ideas where regenerating the economy is concerned.

It's laissez-faire. It's "Let the market decide." If business doesn't believe in it, if business isn't willing to invest in it, if business doesn't see something of potential in places like Elliot Lake and Sault Ste Marie and Chapleau and Wawa and Terrace Bay and all those vital,

viable communities across this province, then who cares? That's evolution. That's Darwinism at its best. Just let it happen. Government has no role to play. Government should not interfere because when government interferes, it just messes things up.

Well, we have for you, if you're interested, example after example of governments in this province, of all stripes, I should say — Conservative, Liberal and New Democrat — who have shown some leadership, who have had the courage of their convictions and moved into communities where difficulty was being experienced and gave some ideas, brought some resources to the table, showed some faith and hope in their future by investing some real money so they could diversify their economy, change direction somewhat and get the train back on the rails again. But this government I think indicated very clearly by the speech from the throne we saw last week that it doesn't believe in that. It believes solely and completely in the forces of the marketplace. That's going to do it.

And they'll paint a picture. We'll hear a picture presented here, probably on May 4 when you present your budget, of how wonderful everything is, of how you've changed so many things to the better for people in this province.

I have to tell you, and I suggest that those of you who have actually gone back home and begun to knock on some doors and do some canvassing, you'll hear the same story too. A lot of people across this province, no matter how you paint the picture, no matter how many times you look at the financial section of whatever newspaper it is that you read and you hear about the historically record-high profits that the corporations are making today, the ordinary men and women in the streets of communities across Ontario, are feeling more uneasy today than they felt four years ago.

Interjection.

Mr Martin: Yes, four years ago when Bob Rae and the New Democrats were running this province. The people of Ontario today whom I talk to, whom I'm sure you talk to, will tell you that they're not sure about their future any more. They used to think they had a job that they really liked, that they worked hard to prepare themselves for, that they trained for, that they were going to be able to give all of their energy and effort to for 15 or 20 or 40 or 50 years, retire from it —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mr Martin: — use the income that they generate from that to have a family, invest in the community, buy a home, maybe even start up a small business. They're not feeling confident that they can do that any more because they don't know. There isn't a big corporation in Ontario today that isn't making those historically record profits except on the backs of the workers. They're shedding workers by the hundreds, whether it's the financial institutions, whether it's industry, whether it's the telecommunications industry, whatever. You look at it. You look at the corporations that are announcing every

time you pick up the financial pages of whatever newspaper you read that they're making historically record-high profits. You'll find that probably somewhere in the year preceding they've laid off literally hundreds of people in order to do that. Every one of those people lives in each of our communities, every one of those people contributes in some significant way to the quality of life that we all enjoy in the communities we call home and they're not feeling good about it any more.

Give yourself a gut check. Ask them to share with you the gut check that they probably give themselves every night before they go to bed. They walk around their house and they look at their wonderful house that they've invested in, that they probably have a big mortgage on. If they're like me, they walk into the kids' bedroom and they kiss their kids goodnight and they thank God they have a nice place to have them sleep in, that there's still heat there in the wintertime and that when they wake up in the morning they can feed them breakfast.

But they probably leave that bedroom and go back to their living room and they worry. They worry about whether they are going to have their job tomorrow or next week or the month after or the next year because, I'll guarantee you, they know somebody in their club, in their recreation program, at the school their kids go to, who has lost their job. When they lose their job, they lose their livelihood and with their livelihood they lose their sense of confidence and they lose their sense of being easy with life and being able to participate in a positive and constructive and creative way with their children, with their spouses, with their partners and in the community in which they live.

I have to tell you that in the Ontario that you've created that we live in today there are more and more people every night doing that really serious and scary gut check that's not feeling really too good.

1900

No matter what you say, no matter how you paint it, no matter how many spin doctors you hire to write your speeches from the throne, to write the spin you put out on every issue that comes up whenever it happens, to put together your budget paper, no matter how many of those people you hire, no matter how many hours you spend on the golf course with your friends and benefactors, who are really excited about the program you've imposed on this province because they are making more money than they ever made before — and as a matter of fact, because of the tax break you've given they think they've died and gone to heaven — what you have to do is what I'm doing. You've got to go back to the people you represent, the Joe and Jane Public out there who really are the people who keep this province on track, who really are the people who contribute in significant and important ways to the economy we all depend on, and ask them how they feel about what you've done, about the program you've imposed and how they feel about their future.

Even better still, ask their adult children, the ones who don't have a job yet, or the ones who do have a job, in

fact probably two or three jobs because that's what it takes today, in many instances, to put enough money on the table to pay the bills. Ask them.

Ask the adult children of some of your constituents when it is that they think they can actually consider moving into a long-term relationship with somebody, having a family, investing in a home, maybe thinking about setting up a small business. See how they feel about it. Ask them how they're feeling right now and I suggest you'll get a very alarming and disturbing story that will speak volumes to you if you're listening, although sometimes I wonder what it is you listen to. Most times I know who it is that you're listening to. But I'll tell you, they will tell you some things that should turn most of your hair grey. They will tell you some things that will cause you to sit up and take notice if you have a heart at all, if you have a conscience at all, if you're working out of any moral framework at all, the stories these people will tell you about how they're feeling, about their uneasiness, about the fact that they're not sure about the future. If you listen to the questions they ask, if you listen to the stories they tell and their concerns, you will change your course.

I suggest to you that we're not far from a provincial election in this province. I'd guess that probably the next two or three weeks will see us all gone from here and out there on the hustings. I'll tell you, the conversation and the discussion and the debate will be interesting.

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): You shouldn't be too happy about that.

Mr Martin: It will be interesting, Wayne. It will be very interesting. If I were you, I'd be trying to figure out where I've gone wrong and what I've done that is causing the unease out there, because if you don't, you'll be one of those people, Wayne, looking for that new job in a month or two.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Jack Carroll (Chatham-Kent): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to say a few things to the member for Sault Ste Marie. A nice story he told us about Elliot Lake. I've heard a lot of good things about Elliot Lake, and obviously he has a new-found interest in that area. However, after 10 minutes of talking about Elliot Lake, he did start off his comments on the throne speech by saying, and I'm going to quote, "This government has shown itself to be bereft of any new or creative ideas to stimulate the economy."

I have to talk about the results. I'm not sure where he came up with that wonderful statement of his, but I would think that the 69 tax cuts, the 540,000 new jobs, the 374,000 fewer people on welfare, and of course not to mention the \$11-billion deficit handed to us by the members of his party, that we will eliminate — I would have to say, contrary to what the member for Sault Ste Marie said, that this government has shown itself with some absolutely, incredibly exciting ways to stimulate the economy and to create new jobs.

I will give the member for Sault Ste Marie some credit. It's interesting to make a comparison between the

New Democratic Party and the Liberals. The New Democratic Party has told us very point-blank that they are going to raise taxes. That is their way of creating new jobs, stimulating the economy: to raise taxes. We tried that in the period 1991-95; it didn't work then and probably won't work now. The Liberals, on the other hand, have promised a whole plethora of wonderful things, and the best we can make out is that they will pay for it with Monopoly money, because the leader of the official opposition hasn't told us where he's going to raise all the money. So to give the member for Sault Ste Marie and his party their credit, they've been up front that they're going to raise taxes.

On the other hand, the Mike-Harris-led government reduced taxes, created jobs, stimulated the economy. It has worked for the last five years; it will work in the future.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Algoma-Manitoulin.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm not going to take the bait.

But I do want to pick up on some of the comments from the member for Sault Ste Marie, in particular his comments about my friend Wilma Sanderson, who passed away on Friday, I think. I was not aware of that until first thing this morning. Wilma was a great contributor to the Elliot Lake area and along the North Shore. She was a person who was respected in the community, who in a variety of fashions helped virtually everyone. I remember some few years ago presenting Wilma with a certificate that named her citizen of the year in Elliot Lake. Elliot Lake will certainly miss Wilma Sanderson.

Some of the other comments the member made about Elliot Lake are true. It has shown a remarkable resilience. It has come back from tremendous adversity. First, in 1990 there were 1,600 people laid off from Rio and Denison, mostly Rio at that time, because they lost private contracts. Then, I think in 1992, the government of Ontario chose to cancel the remaining uranium contracts, contrary, of course, to their election promise not to do that. Nevertheless, the community has rebounded, and it is an exciting place to live. It still faces challenges, as does most of northern Ontario, particularly the North Shore area. But, having represented the area for 12 years, I have great confidence in their future.

Mr Lessard: I want to commend the member for Sault Ste Marie for his remarks about the throne speech. For a while there when I was listening to him, I thought he was the member from Elliot Lake as well as the member for Sault Ste Marie, because he is as concerned about the constituents from Elliot Lake as he is about those from Sault Ste Marie, as he is about the hundreds of thousands of people who live in northern Ontario.

One of the changes the Mike Harris government is making is reducing representation for those people in the north. For those people in the south who may not know where Elliot Lake is in relation to Sault Ste Marie, I know the member for Sault Ste Marie can say something about how huge some of those ridings are up in northern

Ontario. Some of them are the size of France. That really reduces the effectiveness of representation for those in the north.

He talked about the government's involvement in the revitalization of Elliot Lake. In fact, they've been involved in the revitalization of Sault Ste Marie as well, as they were in the revitalization of Windsor, which was hard hit by a recession in the early 1990s. Without that government involvement, without that government intervention, cities like Sault Ste Marie and Elliot Lake, and Windsor for that matter, would not have been able to rebound in the way they have. Now they are strong, vibrant communities with jobs available in them and the people to pay taxes. They are thriving communities.

This government would have you believe that people shouldn't have to pay any taxes, that somehow it's going to make strong, vibrant communities if you just reduce taxes to zero. The member for Sault Ste Marie doesn't buy that, because he sees what effective government can do to revitalize communities.

Mr John L. Parker (York East): I too listened with interest to the comments from the member for Sault Ste Marie. When he got around to addressing the subject of the throne speech, he commented on the large number of employment layoffs in the financial industry, particularly the banks, the number of people the banks have laid off over the past few years, and he's quite right: There has been a large number of layoffs among the banks. I wonder how the member for Sault Ste Marie accounts for the vast increase in net employment in this province over the same period despite the large number of layoffs by the banks. Either he doesn't understand how the economic system in this country works, or maybe we should be even more impressed with the economic record of the Harris government and the job creation record of this government against the difficulties that the member opposite pointed out.

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In the face of layoffs such as the reduction in employment in the banks, this government has presided over the largest expansion in net employment in this province that any of us has seen in our lifetime: over 500,000 net new jobs since June 1995. So I'm even more impressed than I was before with the record of this government after the comments from my friend opposite.

His comments on Elliot Lake: I certainly endorse them and I know who else endorses them. That's my friend Keith Currie, who took me to Elliot Lake, showed me around, introduced me to all the leading citizens of Elliot Lake and throughout the area of the North Shore, from Wawa to Thessalon to Gore Bay and Little Current, to name but four communities in addition to Elliot Lake, a fine community indeed.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mr Martin: It's interesting to see the Conservative members finally rising this evening to participate in the debate. I noted that none of you participated in comments to the previous speaker. I have to say that I probably pushed a few buttons, touched a few nerves, and that's

good, eh, Bart? That's good for this place. It keeps it healthy, keeps it moving, and I appreciate that. I want to thank the member for Chatham-Kent for getting up and participating — great stuff; Algoma-Manitoulin; my colleague and friend from Windsor-Riverside; and the member for York East.

But obviously the members across the way still don't get it, still don't understand what we are so concerned about in the communities we live in re the impact of your agenda, what it is all about. I guess if you spend as much time as you do with your friends and benefactors on the golf course, in the private clubs and jet-setting around the world to check out the global economy and so on, you would not hear or feel or get any real sense of the anxiety, the angst and the disease that's out there among ordinary people. I suggest to you that if you'd sit down and talk to the ordinary people, the men and women of this province who go to work every day and put bread on the table for their families, you'd get a completely different story and you'd understand why I was so completely dismayed with the speech from the throne on Thursday last.

The member for York East talked about an expansion, the largest expansion in the history of Ontario. I suggest to you that it's the largest expansion of part-time work that we've seen in this province in a long, long time. That's where, if any economy is growing, it is happening.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): I'm very pleased to join the debate with respect to the throne speech. I'd like to focus my remarks on three aspects of that throne speech: health care, the economy and the school system.

With respect to health care, I think one thing that is fundamental about this government is that they have not only increased spending, and they've been able to do that to a very strong economy, but they're also fighting for Ontarians with respect to quality health care where the federal government, and the federal Liberals in particular, have cut health care spending to the provinces in significant amounts, in the billions. We went to bat for Ontarians with respect to the federal Liberals. They did nothing but carve out huge amounts of money and put the health care system at risk.

Every cent of the money that we've been able to get out of them, to the tune of \$1 billion earlier this year, has gone back into the health care system. That's our promise.

I can say that the health care initiatives that we have taken throughout the mandate since I've been the MPP for Simcoe Centre have been very significant. I'd just like to mention that we have a brand new hospital, Royal Victoria Hospital. This is basically one of the landmark health care facilities across the province. New facilities and new services have gone into that hospital. For example, we have a breast screening clinic. We have MRI machinery. We also have increased funding for the child speech program. That's for children who are not at the school level, in terms of helping them with speaking

difficulties. Also, we have already been given funding for a new kidney dialysis satellite operation, which is a much-needed service for my riding so people don't have to travel to Toronto and other areas and they can get that service in the city of Barrie, for example.

My riding extends down to Innisfil and also into Bradford-West Gwillimbury, where York County Hospital, which is located in Newmarket, has received significant funding, new services; for example, MRI technology and cardiac care. I happened to be at the hospital on Saturday. They had an open house with seminars throughout the hospital.

I visited the new birthing unit, which is an up-to-date, very modern facility, a true credit to the health care system initiatives of this government. There were tours going on with respect to this new birthing unit. The people were just ecstatic because it's basically a one-stop for the people who are going to be using this facility. I have four children myself and I can tell you that if everything can be done in one hospital room, it's much easier on everybody. That's what they have set up there. It's set up for the parents to work with the doctor, and basically their stay in the hospital can be as long as they wish. The service is truly monumental.

Also, I was there with respect to the new cardiac care unit. That was just a tremendous investment by this government in the health care facility not only for York County but for all of the Simcoe-York district health council, stretching from all of Simcoe county down into Markham and Richmond Hill. That facility, the cardiac care, is going to service that entire area. That is just tremendous news, because we need that facility. We don't want to have to go down to Toronto. People want to be able to get that service within their community.

On attending York County Hospital on Saturday, not only was it about showing the public the new birthing unit and the new cardiac care facility, it was also an exercise in educating the public with respect to preventive medicine, educating them about the different services that are offered not only by the hospital but also by the medical staff at that hospital. I think that's a tremendous initiative.

So I'm very pleased with respect to not only our health care record, but certainly within my riding there have been tremendous investments at the local level, which we've been asking for for many years. Quite frankly, we have to reinvest the money, which is devoted towards new technology and also servicing the areas that need these services so they don't have to go down to Toronto all the time.

We are also looking at the community care access facilities. They have been a tremendous success in terms of dealing with non-hospital-based care. We've invested in the community care access centres in excess of \$32 million in terms of providing that type of home care, which is much needed in our population.

What is also of fundamental importance is long-term care. There hadn't been a new long-term-care bed in this province for over 11 years. The province is investing

billions of dollars to make sure that long-term care is once again put forth and is a priority for this government. There have been allocated to Simcoe county 546 long-term-care beds. The first phase has already gone through: 150 long-term-care beds awarded in Simcoe county, 82 of those to the city of Barrie and 68 to the city of Orillia. With the tremendous growth that has occurred in my riding, and particularly the city of Barrie, we need those long-term-care beds and there's a tremendous demand for them.

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We've also been very fortunate with respect to the province's investments in health care, and in particular the nursing home. We have a new nursing home facility which will provide up to 120 beds. That's going to be opening in the near future.

So I'm very pleased not only with respect to our health care record in terms of the reinvestments in my community, but also that we have spent \$1.5 billion more on health care since we were elected.

Not only is it being reinvested, but we also went to bat to make sure the federal Liberals coughed up the money they took away from Ontarians and that we had that money back in terms of, at least partially, the \$1 billion, because they cut out far in excess of that from the health care system. The federal Liberals are to blame for a lot of the problems this government had to put up with in terms of adjusting to and dealing with not only the debt that it was left by the previous NDP government but also the downloading of the health care services by the federal Liberals. They should be ashamed for the way they've treated the province and Ontarians with respect to the way they've handled health care at the federal level.

Mr Wettlaufer: Where were the provincial Liberals at that time?

Mr Tascona: I'd like to also comment with respect to just where the provincial Liberals were at that time. They were nowhere. They are essentially puppets of the federal government, and that's all they ever will be. We need a true opposition to the federal Liberals in Ottawa, and this government is exactly that.

Another area I'd like to comment on is the economy. The economy, under the leadership of Mike Harris, has done phenomenally. We got rid of anti-company legislation with Bill 40, which was a very bad piece of legislation: very pro-union, a very negative deterrent with respect to investment from the outside in terms of coming into the province of Ontario. When we enacted Bill 7 it was a major step forward, a major statement across this province and across North America and into Europe that this province was not going to be catering to the trade unions in terms of their whims. We were basically going to make sure this economy was strong and we were going to make sure we had balanced legislation that served the needs of employees, served the needs of the companies and employers, and also was fair to the trade unions. That was a major step.

Where has that taken us? Where it has taken us is that we have 544,000 net new jobs and a booming economy. I

can say for my riding and the city of Barrie there has been tremendous growth. It's the fastest-growing community in all of Canada. We have had investment from all over in terms of new types of technology, new types of small business. We're seeing tremendous growth at the new Honda plant, with an added shift, which benefits all of the community.

I can tell you that the investments that have taken place with respect to this province are surely a sign of confidence, but another part of that is the tax cuts, where we have basically given consumers back the money that the government was spending improperly. They should be spending the money. That has led to renewed consumer confidence, renewed consumer spending, and basically what we have is an economy that is on a roll.

What we have to see also, and what we have seen, is the welfare rolls significantly decrease, to the extent, I would add, that 374,000 people who have been taken off the welfare rolls are able-bodied people who can work, which is a distinct contrast from what happened in the late 1980s when the provincial Liberal government was in power. We had a booming economy. They not only spent all our money and put us into debt, they made welfare so attractive that during that economic boom more people were going on welfare than at any other time in our history.

It took the measures of the Mike Harris government to make sure that welfare wasn't a more attractive alternative than working for a living. Basically, what we've set up is a system of work for welfare, getting people back into the community, giving them a job, because quite frankly the best social policy that anyone can have is for someone not only to have a job but to also be a homeowner.

That's been the focus of this government: to put money back into the consumers' pockets — it's their money; there's only one taxpayer — and to make sure not only that they have an opportunity in terms of having secure employment but also the fiscal management of this government. It inherited an \$11.2-billion deficit. It's on schedule to be reduced to zero based on our fiscal planning. I can tell you, it all came based on policies with respect to tax cuts, which have increased the amount of money into the revenue side by over \$5 billion, and prudent fiscal management.

Let's face it, those are the choices this government has had to make. We've not only focused on good, strong fiscal management in the governing of this province, but we also have reinvested in the health care system, notwithstanding the federal Liberals taking money out of the health care system and not putting one cent back without a major confrontation from the Mike Harris government. We were successful in doing that with no help from the provincial Liberals.

Also, one other fundamental area that I want to comment on, being a parent with schoolchildren in the system, is our education policy. We have set up a funding formula that treats the citizens of my riding fairly. Every student receives the same amount of funding for their

education across the province, which I think is a fair policy.

We're also seeing an increase in construction of schools. In my riding there is in excess of 12 new schools being built. I can give you an example: In Alcona Beach there are two brand-new high schools that are going to be built in that area. They've never had any high schools in the town of Innisfil. They're finally getting their due measure with these two new high schools. It's going to alleviate the pressure in the south end of Barrie from students who had been coming into the Barrie schools from the town of Innisfil. That's going to be good news and reduce the pressures with respect to school enrolment in my area.

Also, we've had tremendous investment in Georgian College during the term of this government. We have seen investment in terms of the computer system that we've put in, in the disability program for students who are developmentally challenged. We've also seen tremendous investment, in excess of \$4 million, in the Canadian Automotive Institute, which is going to create tremendous opportunities by the increased enrolment in their automotive design and tool-and-die-making courses.

We've also seen investment in Georgian College in other areas. Next week we're going to have a tremendous investment by IBM in the computer technology of Georgian College. I'm very proud to see that type of investment, which has been matched by the provincial government, in Georgian College. It means a lot not only to my riding but throughout Simcoe county and also Muskoka-Georgian Bay.

One of the fundamental pretexts of our education policy, definitely at the elementary and the high school levels, is standards. We have instituted provincial standards with respect to student testing. We have instituted standardized report cards which parents can now understand. We have instituted standards with respect to class sizes and with respect to teaching time.

But one of the fundamental comments and statements that was made in the throne speech was with respect to the Charter of Education Rights. I just want to comment on that in the final part of my participation in this debate tonight. I firmly believe in teacher testing. I think what you have to look at is the protection of a child to ensure that they receive a quality education.

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We have to remember we're in a very special relationship —

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): Ask the teachers. Test Mike Harris.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Cochrane North.

Mr Tascona: — between an adult, the teacher, and a child, the student. Parents, we must remember, have no choice in who teaches their child. Everybody knows that we in general have very good teachers, but everyone knows or has had the experience of a bad teacher who causes that student harm in their educational pursuit. Everyone has that common experience.

We know there's resistance to teacher testing from the teachers' unions. They not only resisted the standards that we wanted to put with respect to student testing, they also resisted the standardized report cards. They have resisted every type of standard we've tried to put into the education system. Resistance from the teachers' unions has not been succumbed to by this government. We have shown leadership in the way we have handled that. Leadership requires you to do what is in the public's interest and not in the special-interest groups' interest. If there was no leadership in this province, we wouldn't have the reduction in the deficit that we're having, also the increase in the jobs in the economy.

We haven't made any private deals with the teachers' unions, unlike the provincial Liberals. We have come out and said where we stand. We have promised what we were going to do and we basically are doing that. There are no secret deals. They're not coming out and saying what they're going to do with respect to the education system. They're saying they're going to scrap all the standards under Bill 160. But what are they going to do? What's the deal they made with the teachers' unions?

What about Bill 7? They're going to repeal Bill 7, the balanced legislation with respect to labour law. What's the deal they made with the unions to take that stance? You can bet it's not going to be in the public interest, it's going to be in the special interests. Because we all know the provincial Liberals will do whatever it takes to get a vote.

I'll tell you this: The teachers' unions have also been against the College of Teachers. I can say thank God for the College of Teachers because they have done an excellent job with respect to removing teachers who have exhibited improper conduct towards children.

It's impossible under the current collective bargaining regime, as we all know, to remove a teacher for not being qualified. You will never hear about an unqualified teacher being removed from the classroom. Testing not only is a necessity, but I will say this: We test drivers. We test public health nurses. People say, "Well, you don't test lawyers, you don't test doctors, you don't test dentists." You don't need to test lawyers, you don't need to test doctors and you don't need to test dentists, because they're in the marketplace. They get tested every day. If nobody wants to use their services because they're no good, they'll be bankrupt and they'll be out of business.

I believe in a universal public education system, but there must be education safeguards, especially in an adult-child relationship where the harm is that the child is not properly educated. So I say that teacher testing will show that teachers will get recognition because they have basically passed those tests, and that's a positive review.

The Acting Speaker: Questions and comments?

Mr Cleary: I wasn't going to comment but I can't sit here and listen to all that. He doesn't tell us that the debt will be \$22 billion higher when you go to the polls this time than when you were there the last time. You don't tell that to the residents of Ontario. You don't tell them

about your some \$100 million in government advertising. You don't tell about all these pamphlets that go out to the ridings. My mailbox is chock full of blue and white pamphlets every day. I've got enough to circulate them, but I wouldn't do that.

They don't tell about all the money that was taken from the municipalities and the infrastructure, municipal roads and bridges, and that is now given back at election time. Anyway, the municipalities are pretty disgusted over what's happened.

They tell about all the great things in dialysis. Well, we have a new dialysis machine in my riding and we still have people travelling to Ottawa three times a week to get the service they need to keep alive. I know those are things they're not telling.

They're not telling about all the money they're spending on consultants either, but the taxpayers know. They ask me about that because I get that information from time to time about what's going on.

Interjections.

Mr Cleary: You can heckle all you like but it's a fact and we're going to talk more about that.

I can't sit here and listen to the garbage that I heard down at the other end. Everything may be rosy in his riding but it sure is not — you split our community right down the centre.

Mike Harris said in his last campaign that it was not his intention to close hospitals. He came and closed hospitals in many communities and our area is one of those. We're going to lose our volunteers if somebody doesn't put their heads together and get this thing solved. It's not healthy. It's not good. The staff, the doctors, the nurses are all upset.

Mr Lessard: What I heard from the member for Simcoe Centre was just a lot of schizophrenic claptrap. First he started out by talking about all the big investment that has been made in health care in his community — long-term-care beds, a new hospital, a new MRI machine — and then talks about how much more money this government has been spending in health care since they've been elected. Then in the other breath he's talking about how much they've been cutting taxes and how much that's going to benefit Ontario. He just doesn't get it. You can't reduce taxes and continue to invest in health care in his community.

He complained about the deficit they got from the previous government, but the fact is that if they didn't have that crazy tax scheme that benefits the most wealthy in our community, we wouldn't have any deficit whatsoever right now. But we're still continuing to borrow money so they can fund that tax scheme and buy those public health care goodies for their communities.

I think what is clear from this throne speech is that this government's agenda is going to be, "Attack labour, attack teachers, attack workers from Quebec." They say they should be the alternative, a strong Ontario government to deal with the federal Liberals in Ottawa. Well, I agree that we need a strong Ontario government to deal with the federal Liberals; I don't agree that it

should be a Conservative government. I believe it should be an NDP government.

I am anticipating the members across saying, "The test for MPPs is coming up in a few weeks," but I know in my own riding it was NDP 45% of the popular vote in the by-election and Progressive Conservatives 5%. So we know where they're heading in the Windsor area when it comes to the test for MPPs.

Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East): I'd just like to make a few comments with regard to the statement made today by the member for Simcoe Centre. I just hope the opposition parties will take the opportunity to read Hansard tomorrow, read what he said in that speech, and I'm sure your comments here will not be nearly as negative as what I've just heard in the House on that speech. I firmly believe that what he has said here is really what's happened in Ontario.

I want to relate to you that when this government took office in 1995 the transfer payment from the federal Liberals was \$7.88 billion. Today that transfer payment from the federal government is \$4.3 billion. Tell me how much they have cut us for our health care and our social programs in Ontario. It's almost \$4 billion. They gave us back \$1.5 billion and everybody thinks that was great. Well, I say to the federal Liberal government and to the Liberal caucus here, you should be working with your federal cousins to try and get us back what they took from us.

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I want to also mention, with regard to education and school closures, that if you look at the statistics and find out how many schools were closed in the 1985-90 Liberal regime and look at it from 1990 to 1995, both those parties closed twice as many schools as this party has in the last four years. Just look at the statistics and you'll find out.

Workfare has been one of the major thrusts of this government. It has worked. I know people in my riding who never had a job, they were on welfare, and now those people are working. It has been one of the keynotes in our whole Common Sense Revolution. It was great.

The other aspect is the Ontario-Quebec situation. That should be equal on both sides. It has not been, and it should be. I thank Mike Harris for taking the leadership to make it happen.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): I'd like to add to the comments of the member for Simcoe Centre. I certainly give him credit for being well scripted. I know that's the same speech that every other Tory member will repeat. We just heard that it was scripted from the Premier's office, and that comes through loud and clear.

What the member forgot to mention to us is how this government has systematically polarized every aspect of life in this province. He forgot to mention to us how this government has gone after nurses, has gone after teachers and also has gone after working men and women in this province. When we talk about the health care system, they forget to tell us why there are people in waiting rooms dying across this province. They don't tell us why

people have to wait months and months for surgery. They don't tell us why ambulances are on redirect, not only in Toronto but across this province. Are people making this up?

If you're doing such a great job, as you claim you are with the health care system, if you claim that the system is in better shape than it has ever been, then I presume people are imagining that they're waiting in hospital hallways across this province and can't get a hospital bed. I guess they're just making that up. I guess people who are sitting in ambulances, who can't get into a hospital, are probably just imagining; it's not happening in their Ontario under Mike Harris. People who are waiting months and months for essential surgery, again, are just imagining that's happening in this province, because you Tory members have told us it's not.

You guys have your heads in the clouds. You have lost touch with reality. Too much time at the Albany Club and not enough time on Main Street across this province. Very clearly, I can tell you: This election is going to come down to a debate about health care in this province and the vision for health care of Mike Harris in the last four years. Whatever vision may come forward in the next week or two for health care, we understand it's more of the same. Ontarians understand clearly that if Mike Harris gets re-elected, it's more of the same: another four years of misery in health care, in education and in the environment. I'm looking forward to the debate in this campaign, because you will pay a price for what you've done.

The Acting Speaker: Response, member for Simcoe Centre.

Mr Tascona: I'm very pleased to respond to the members. I'd like to be able to respond to the MPP for Cornwall, but quite frankly I don't know what he's getting at. He seems to be upset; everybody seems to be upset in his riding. Maybe they're just upset with the member because he has done nothing. Quite frankly, I would say to the member, maybe you should be focusing more on the needs of your constituents. If you're concerned about health care, as a provincial Liberal you should have gone to the federal Liberals a long time ago and said, "Don't cut," as the member for Simcoe East has said, "\$7.8 billion from our health care system." But he did nothing.

MPP for Windsor-Riverside, you ought to be ashamed, referring to schizophrenia in the improper way you've done in this forum today. You ought to apologize right now. With respect to his remarks on the merits, all I can say is I'm not ashamed of the investment of this province in health care and education in the riding of Simcoe Centre. Quite frankly, every investment that has gone into the riding of Simcoe Centre has been needed. With respect to the funding of tax schemes, I would like to say that there is only one taxpayer. It's the taxpayers' money that is being returned to them. I don't think we have ownership of that money, like the NDP believes. That's why they ran up a \$100-billion debt and almost ruined this province under the leadership of Bob Rae.

The member for Simcoe East understands the situation with respect to the school system, in terms of the cuts that were made from 1985 to 1995 with respect to closures and the health care cuts by the federal Liberals.

The MPP for Hamilton East quite frankly needs a reality check, because he hasn't stood up once — I guess he's afraid of Sheila Copps. He can't stand up to her to make sure we get the money from the federal Liberals for health care.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you. The member for Hamilton East.

Mr Agostino: Madam Speaker, I consent to share my time with the member from Renfrew, Mr Conway.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Is there consent that the member for Hamilton East share his time with the member for Renfrew North? Agreed.

Mr Agostino: When one reads the throne speech and looks at what is really in there, what we see is a document that shows a government clearly trying to run away from its record. It shows a government with no vision. It shows a government with no agenda for the future in this province.

I'm going to focus in on three areas: health care, education and the environment. When you look at those three key areas and you look at what Mike Harris promised during the campaign and what Mike Harris has done, and how it has hurt our community and average, hard-working people in Ontario, I think we truly understand that this is not an agenda for the average Ontarian. This is an agenda for the rich Ontarians, for the well-to-do, for the well-connected, for Mike Harris's friends, and the rest of us are left out in the cold. We have seen \$800 million cut from our hospitals. We have seen a broken promise, a sacred trust that Mike Harris made with the people of Ontario. Mike Harris said it was not his plan to close hospitals. As of today we have 45 hospitals that have been closed or are slated to be closed across Ontario. That was a promise that Harris made, a promise that he was not going to close any hospitals across this province — another broken promise.

He promised not to bring in user fees — we have over \$300 million worth of user fees. He is now taking sick patients from chronic care beds and putting them into discount-rate, bargain-basement health care through long-term care. It has had a real impact on real people. In my own community, a community that sent four Tories to Queen's Park, here's what we get back from Mike Harris as a result of that. In our hospitals, between 1995 and 1998, the number of nurses declined by 146 — 146 fewer nurses in those three years. Between 1995 and 1998, 227 fewer beds in Hamilton hospitals, a direct result of the Mike Harris cuts. The Hamilton Health Sciences Corp has had to run a massive debt just to try to maintain its central services in health care. You have cut over \$108 million from hospitals in the Hamilton area, \$108 million from front-line hospital services.

In 1998, in this province, in the city of Hamilton, for an average 4.2 hours per day, one or more of the Hamilton hospitals was on critical care bypass, not taking

patients — every single day in 1998. Ambulances, on average, for over four hours a day were driving around the city of Hamilton looking for a hospital where they could bring a patient to an emergency department. That is the real story of the Mike Harris health care agenda and the Mike Harris health care cuts.

But there's something more to this. It impacts real people. I had the opportunity two weeks ago, as a result of frantic calls by a number of staff people at the Hamilton General Hospital, to drop in and see the situation myself. What I saw was disgusting, disgraceful and horrendous to believe it's happening in Ontario today. The nurses and doctors are doing their darnedest to keep up. Eight patients were lined up in the hallways. In the same room where we had people with trauma, we had people with heart attacks — a violent individual who had to be restrained by two police officers in a bed next to someone who has had a heart attack. The reason they were there was because there was no other room. We had nurses and doctors cleaning out a room, chairs and tables being moved out of a meeting room so they could put a bed in there to look after a patient in the emergency department.

Then, the next day, an 87-year-old man who had been sitting for two and a half days in that hallway without a bed died in that hallway, without a bed — an 87-year-old man. All he was asking for was to have his final few moments in dignity, in a setting that most of us would believe is appropriate. A hallway in an emergency department was not appropriate. That is a result of what you have done, a result of your government's cuts to health care. That's the real story, with real people. All the spinning and the rhetoric from the Premier's office that the members will continue to talk about doesn't make it any better, doesn't make the family of this 87-year-old man feel any better about how their father died in Ontario in 1999. It isn't going to cut it. That is the reality of what you've done.

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Our government has made it clear they're going to bring in enforceable health standards in Ontario. We're going to be the first jurisdiction in Canada under a Liberal government to bring in standards that will be the law of the province which must be kept by every hospital right across this province. We're going to ensure that patients who need a hospital bed will get one, and if they need a room they will be in a room. No cancer patient will wait more than four weeks for radiation treatment. We're going to guarantee 48-hour hospital care for new moms.

We're going to ensure that there's a system in place that looks after people first, because we believe the front-line emergency and front-line health care services are not negotiable. They're not political games and tools to be played with, with phony announcements by this government the way they have. It is a disgrace what you have done with health care in Ontario. It is a disgrace the lives you've put in jeopardy and the lives you've disrupted as a

result of your blind, chainsaw approach to health care cuts across this province.

You've performed no better in education. In Hamilton, 30 schools are on the cutting block as a result of your actions. You've cut over \$1 billion from our classrooms. You have attacked in a manner that no government ever, in the history of this province, has attacked a group of individuals, and that is our teachers. You have gone out of your way to discredit teachers, to beat up teachers across Ontario. I find it tough to understand how you believe that you can improve our health care system by attacking the real individuals who are most responsible for ensuring that that education system is delivered across Ontario.

How do you improve the education system by beating up the teachers, by demoralizing teachers, by punishing teachers? It is simply a cheap, sleazy political stunt to try to score some cheap points, and you don't understand whom you're hurting. You're hurting the students by attacking the teachers, but you fail to understand that. We've got to put an end to that polarization and we've got to put an end to that approach. We have to work together with teachers and parents and educators across the province and not simply continue to beat them up and try to step on them as your government has. We're going to change that.

The Liberal government will make it very clear that we're going to change that. We've outlined a plan that is going to bring Ontario back to the level it was at in education and bring it back to a province where we can proud of our education system.

I understand your hidden agenda. I understand you want charter schools, voucher schools and private schools. I understand that and Ontarians understand that, but Ontarians and Liberals understand clearly that we are going to support and fund and ensure that there's a universally accessible, properly funded public education system across this province. That is not your agenda. We understand that. The Americanization of our schools is your agenda. Ontarians understand that. This election will fix that and we'll change that with a Liberal government.

When it comes to the environment, it has been a disgrace. You have clearly the worst environmental record of any government in any jurisdiction in the history of this country. You are second to none. You've cut the budget more than anyone else. You've laid off more staff than anyone else. Today in Ontario, environmental standards are not being enforced, fines are down, charges are down. Mike Harris has become a polluter's best friend in this province. Environmental policies are no longer made in the cabinet rooms; they're now made in the boardrooms of this province. Unfortunately, 1,800 Ontarians a year are dying prematurely as a result of poor air quality, and this government has done absolutely nothing except slash the budgets, reduce the regulations and fire the inspectors who are to enforce this law.

In the short time I've had, I've tried to outline clearly some of the difficulties under this government. Very

clearly there is a better alternative here; there is a better way. Ontarians are sick and tired of fighting, sick and tired of polarization, sick and tired of division. They want to be sure that when they go to a hospital, there's a bed for them; they want to be sure that their child in school has a top-quality education; and they want to make sure they have an environment that can be proud of and that the air they breathe does not kill them.

Every single action of this government in those areas has been detrimental to Ontarians. Every single step you have taken has been to hurt the people who need help in this province. You are trying to simply look after and cater to your rich friends, your connected friends and the Premier's friends. Very clearly, I can tell you that is a small, small part of Ontario, and come election time the rest of Ontario will speak out, and speak out very clearly, and you'll be back on the opposition side where you belong.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): Mr Speaker, I would be pleased to share my time this evening with my colleague from Hamilton East.

I want to direct my attention to that part of the governor's speech which concerned itself with health care. Looking at the governor's speech, I'm looking at that heading on page 11, "Health Care We Can Depend On."

I'd like to take the opportunity tonight afforded me by the throne speech debate to report on my travels throughout the Ottawa Valley over the past three months, since we last met just before Christmas 1998. I've had the opportunity, as have many members, of visiting my constituents, and over the course of the January-February-March period I had public meetings in communities in the Deep River, Barry's Bay, Pembroke and Eganville areas to talk to my constituents and to hear from them about their concerns.

There is no question that the number one concern on behalf of my constituents is the state of the health care system. In fact, I have brought with me tonight a letter with an attached petition given to me just a short time ago by Mrs Donna Reimer of Barry's Bay, a letter decrying the situation with home care in Renfrew county and the fact that more and more seniors who need home care are being told by the Harris government that they should expect less, not more.

Mrs Reimer attaches to her letter 352 signatures collected in the Barry's Bay-Killaloe-Combermere area of West Renfrew county, all of which signatures point to the widespread concern in the upper Ottawa Valley about government-of-Ontario-imposed cuts on home care.

It's not just home care. It is now quite clear to people in the Pembroke area what the impacts have been as a result of the Harris government ordering closed the century-old Pembroke Civic Hospital. I believe that as I stand here today, the Pembroke Civic Hospital is the only hospital that has been officially closed and the building sold in the last while.

I think it is very clear as we head into this electoral mandate that the people of Ontario are going to want an opportunity to discuss and pass judgment on the way in

which the Harris government went about restructuring the hospital sector in this province. The people of the Ottawa Valley remember that it was Mike Harris who said categorically that he did not intend to close hospitals. Well, the Pembroke Civic Hospital was ordered closed by the Harris government and the community got precious little opportunity to debate that closure.

It's not just that a good building has been closed and lost to hospital service, but more importantly, over \$9 million of health budget has been taken out of the Pembroke area on an annual basis forever.

The people of my community — and I live in Pembroke; it's the largest community in the county of Renfrew — were well served for many years by two hospitals: the Pembroke General and the Pembroke Civic. Did there need to be restructuring? Yes. But did it need to be done this way? Absolutely not. There is a deep wound and there is very real anger about the loss of service by virtue of the very cruel and arbitrary closure of the Pembroke Civic Hospital.

I'll be saying in the upcoming campaign that when I, as a member of this Legislature, had an opportunity to debate the legislation that created that monster commission, the Health Services Restructuring Commission, I stood in my place three years ago and fought against that legislation because it contained such sweeping, draconian and arbitrary powers that I don't believe any commission should ever have. I not only spoke against Bill 26 but I voted against that bill. People like Leo Jordan stood in this place and voted for Bill 26, the legislation that created the mechanism that slammed the door shut on the Pembroke Civic Hospital. Now we are told the count is up to some 43 or 44 other hospitals that are either going to be ordered closed, have been ordered closed or ordered merged, like the Grace Hospital in Ottawa and the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Kingston, to name but two other examples.

Let me repeat: The Harris government, after saying it would not close hospitals, passed draconian legislation that caused the Pembroke Civic Hospital to be closed. We not only lost a century-old tradition of excellent hospital service provided by the Pembroke Civic Hospital, but let me state again, the people of the upper Ottawa Valley have lost, as a result of the closure of the Pembroke Civic Hospital, over \$9 million of annual health and hospital budget. That's been taken from us on an annual basis forever.

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My colleagues in the government must understand you cannot come into a community like Pembroke and take away \$9 million or \$10 million of annual hospital and health budget and not expect that it is going to have an impact. It has had a real and negative impact. The hospitals in Renfrew and Barry's Bay and Deep River are feeling a very real pressure on their emergency departments.

I believe I read in the Renfrew Mercury just a couple of weeks ago that since the Pembroke Civic Hospital closed, the visits to the Renfrew Victoria emergency

department have shot up by something like 30% to 40% to 50%. And of course the reinvestments that have been promised are some considerable time off. Yes, there have been some monies provided, but the bulk of the reinvestments are going to have to await the reconfiguration and the renovation of the Pembroke General Hospital, which we were told a few years ago was only going to be \$5 million or \$6 million, and now we're told that the cost of that renovation might be anywhere between \$12 million and \$18 million.

Hospital care. Home care. Cancer care. A year ago I visited the cancer clinics in Ottawa, in Sudbury and in Kingston to hear from the excellent people at Cancer Care Ontario and those facilities, including my own cancer societies and other caregivers in eastern Ontario, about the good things that were happening in cancer care and the additional pressures that needed to be met. I want to say fairly that good things are being done in cancer care, but do you know what I was told by a number of key people in Cancer Care Ontario serving eastern and my part of midnorthern Ontario a year ago? They said: "We have already submitted a supplementary budgetary request for an additional \$16.4 million. Will you please do what you can to pressure the minister and the government to give us that money, because the cancer pressures are building everywhere in the system."

I raised questions in the House. I wrote letters. I did what I thought I could. And we waited and we waited. There was a long delay before there was any response. People across my county and my region looked, and what did they see? A delay on the additional resources that Cancer Care had asked for, but they saw and felt and heard a literal avalanche of government advertising. There was television advertising. There was print advertising. There was radio advertising. Premier Harris and his colleagues had no trouble finding tens of millions of dollars in the last little while to spend on advertising, much of it on health care, which deeply offended a lot of people in this province, many of them supporters of the current government. They rightly felt that the money should have been given to cancer care. That money should have been given to front-line services in hospitals and home care. We did not need \$100 million to be spent on self-promotional advertising, and people to this day continue to be deeply offended not only by the wrong-headed priorities that this kind of advertising budget bespeaks, but the incredible attitude that it also reflects.

If I have met one person I have met scores of people over the last few months who have said to me: "How is it possible that politicians, particularly our Premier, can spend my hard-earned tax money on that kind of advertising telling me about what's going on in the health system when my experience and the experience of my family insofar as health care is concerned is very, very different? I consider the advertisements, particularly on health care, propaganda of the most disgusting kind." And it goes on and on and on.

Yes, Mr Speaker, the campaign has begun, and let me tell you that in the Ottawa Valley it is going to be a

campaign where people are going to focus their attention on what has happened to health care and particularly on who it was that —

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

Mr Lessard: It was interesting to listen to the member for Renfrew North talk about how the campaign has already begun. It's true. The campaign has begun and people are looking for a real alternative to the Mike Harris government not only in the Ottawa Valley but in other parts of Ontario, like Windsor, as well.

The member talked about the cuts that have been made to health care and the hospitals that have closed in areas of the province, including his own riding.

I anticipate the arguments from the Progressive Conservative members about how much health care spending has increased, but they fail to recognize the increase in population, the inflationary pressures on spending, the increased age of the population and the increased demand for health care services. When you take those into consideration, spending hasn't increased in health care in our communities. That's something that communities are noticing, hospitals are noticing.

Even though many of those cuts have been the result of the reduction in federal Liberal transfer payments, the member for Renfrew North didn't allude to those. We've seen some of those cuts restored, but only a small part of those cuts has been restored for health care. We wonder whether that is what the Liberal vision for health care is in our communities.

The member talked about increased cancer care, hospital care and home care. Those health care services are the things that people are going to be considering when the election comes about. People will be asking: "How is it that we're going to be able to pay for those increased health care services and still maintain the Tory tax cut? Where is the money for those services going to come from?"

Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): I was quite interested in the comments my colleague from Renfrew North has been making relative to the health care system, and more particularly to the closing of the Civic Hospital in the city of Pembroke. The first question that comes to my mind is, what did the member do? I don't recall him taking any action. I don't recall him even presenting a petition from the city of Pembroke about this closing. I spoke to him about it and he said, "No, no, no, that's a difficult issue. I'm hands off on that," and that was right out in the hall of this building. I recall it like yesterday.

When difficult decisions have to be made, the Mike Harris team has the courage to make them.

I'm going to tell my friend from Renfrew North that I've travelled the riding also and I've talked to the people, and they told me that they were very well aware that two hospitals were not required. The question was not whether we needed two hospitals. It was which one would be closed and how the administration would work following the closing. That is what is causing the difficulty in the city of Pembroke, from the people I've

talked to to date. I'm not finished talking to them and I'll be investigating further on that subject. But to stand there and make the statements that my colleague has made tonight relative to this government and its actions in closing one of the hospitals in Pembroke, I cannot accept that he really means what he says.

Mr Cleary: I just want to congratulate the member from Renfrew for his fine speech. I know that I had talked about the hospital situation too on many occasions because we had something similar that was going to happen in my riding, and it did.

The other thing that I want to put on the record is the community and the fundraisers, especially when the restructuring commission was in Cornwall and they were questioned about the hospital situation and that one would probably be closing. One of the members of the commission said, "You're probably going to have to build another new hospital in four or five years' time anyway." I was right in the room, I heard it very clearly, and I can't believe that I heard such garbage come out of his mouth.

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I know that we fundraised out in our area. We just went through fundraisers to add to the General Hospital, the Hotel Dieu Hospital. Now they're going to renovate and I don't know where we're going to get all the money from in the community, to raise the part of the money that the municipality and the residents of my community will have to raise. It's not there. There's lots of room in those two hospitals under one administration, and you don't need to listen to a restructuring commission that did not even look the situation over properly.

Right now, they're stumbling on things in my community that the restructuring commission never saw at the hospitals: moving one department to the other hospital. I had doctors in my office in the past few weeks and they're disgusted and fed up with what has happened with the restructuring commission. They're going to be a lot more coming out and it's not over yet, because in our 20/20 Plan we will look at the situation again.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I'd like to congratulate both the member for Hamilton East and the member for Renfrew North. I would say to the government members that you need to listen to the passion in these members' voices, because they truly represent the passion that exists in our communities around hospitals and what you've done to our hospital system.

The member for Renfrew North is quite right when he talks about the deep wounds in his community. Those wounds are caused by a number of things: (1) They are caused by the lack of consultation that has happened; (2) they are caused by the very strong belief among about half the population that the wrong hospital was chosen, both because of the physical plant at that hospital and because of the services that now are not available in that community, particularly the reproductive services that are no longer available in that community. Those are very serious wounds in that community.

The member for Lanark-Renfrew is right that it was a community that was prepared to agree that only one hospital was needed, given the change in care. But the way this government set up the restructuring commission that came into town, made announcements, never talked to anybody, never visited the buildings, never took account of the fact that it is going to cost about twice as much as they estimated it would to put an emergency department in place at the Pembroke General Hospital that's going to serve that population, that's where the problem came in: the way you do things, the way you bull things through, the way you do not listen to the community, and that's what is going to cause you problems when you get on the hustings.

I would say very clearly that there has been a huge underestimation of the damage you continue to cause by not flowing the needed funds to allow hospitals like the Pembroke General Hospital to serve the population it has been ordered to serve.

Mr Conway: As I indicated, the campaign has begun, and I can tell you that in Renfrew-Nipissing-Pembroke we are going to debate this health care issue. I regret that my colleague the member from Lanark, Mr Jordan, has said what he said because quite frankly — and I've got to stay within the parliamentary rules here — his representation of my involvement is absolutely untrue. I can understand —

Interjections.

Mr Conway: — because he lives in Smiths Falls. The member from Lanark has now come north to Pembroke. But I can tell you I was there, as were a number of good Conservatives in my community. It was a very serious effort that was made by a number of them.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. Would you stop the clock, please. The Chair recognises the member on a point of order.

Mr Wettlaufer: The member from Renfrew referred to one of our members as having made a statement which is untrue. Mr Speaker, you know and he knows, with the number of years that he has been in this place, that to make a statement like that is totally unparliamentary, totally out of order, and should be withdrawn immediately.

The Deputy Speaker: That is a point of order. I would ask the member for Renfrew North to withdraw that comment.

Mr Conway: It was certainly an inaccurate statement.

The Deputy Speaker: I'd ask you to withdraw.

Mr Conway: All right. We'll debate this, because I've got to tell you I have seen and heard —

The Deputy Speaker: I'd ask you to withdraw the comment.

Mr Conway: I withdraw, Mr Speaker, because I have to. I want to say —

Mr Wettlaufer: Come on, Sean.

Mr Conway: No, I am telling you, you have cut the guts out of our community, and this party in government is going to have to bear its responsibility. Three years ago we had an opportunity to stand in our places and vote yes

or no to that commission, and I proudly argued against that bill and the enormously draconian powers that were being given to it.

Let me say, those of us who live in Pembroke and serve the area went to the commission several times. We went to senior people in the government. We made every effort to talk some sense into people and we were not able to do so. Now we are left with a deeply divided, deeply wounded community, the results of which are affecting in a negative way the quality of hospital and health care.

I repeat, you've not only closed the Pembroke Civic Hospital and given the community the back of your hand, but you've taken out of Pembroke and area forever \$9 million or \$10 million worth of health and hospital budget. That is coming home to roost and to hurt people.

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. Further debate? The Chair recognizes the member for Windsor-Riverside.

Mr Lessard: You can tell by the intensity and the tone of the debate that it's not only from last week's throne speech that we know the campaign is on. It's clear whenever you turn on the television, whenever you listen to the radio, whenever you look in the mailbox, whenever you look in the newspaper that the campaign is on.

Just last week I got this brochure, "Important Health Information You Requested From the Government of Ontario." You open that up on the first page, "Dear Ontario Resident," and there's a letter signed by Mike Harris in there talking about health care.

This morning when I was on my way to my community office in Windsor I listened to the radio, CIMX-FM, 89X, in Windsor. I heard an advertisement for a summer jobs program for youth. Who does the voice-over on that advertisement but Mike Harris?

I got to my office and I opened up a newspaper that serves the French-language community in my area, *Le Rempart*. There is an ad from the Premier of Ontario in that newspaper.

When I was watching television last night with my wife I saw an ad from the Progressive Conservative Party of Ontario attacking the Liberal leader for not being an effective leader who should receive the votes of the people in the province, questioning his leadership abilities. Imagine that.

I also got this booklet last week, "Ontario Education: Opening the Door to Success." You open the booklet up and you see there's a picture of Mike Harris on the back page of this booklet.

There's no doubt in my mind that the campaign has begun. I'm sure those campaign buses are gassed up and parked in a garage someplace and are ready to go. The NDP is not wasting any time to get out on the campaign trail. Our bus is out there already.

Mr Wettlaufer: Yours is parked in front of Queen's Park.

Mr Lessard: That's right.

I'm pleased to say that our leader, Howard Hampton, has been out there campaigning. In fact, after the throne

speech, on Friday he came down to Windsor-St Clair and assisted me to open up my campaign office. So we're ready for the campaign. In fact, we were the first to introduce our election platform and I'm going to talk about some of the things that are in that election platform.

One of the things that's clear, and it's been demonstrated in the response to the throne speech and the response that I've heard from constituents since my re-election in a by-election in September 1997, is that the voters in Ontario are more polarized than they have ever been in my recollection.

It's clear that the choices that have been made by the Mike Harris government have not been in the best interests of working families in Ontario. Working families, when they hear this government talk about their big tax scheme, their tax-cutting agenda, look at their paycheque at the end of the week and say: "Where is that benefit that I was supposed to receive? Where is that big bonus that I was going to receive in my pay packet?" Where is all that money that the members across the way in the government are talking about returning to consumers, to taxpayers? They're saying, "This isn't the government's money, it's taxpayers' money," but we know there are some taxpayers in Ontario who are getting that benefit and there are some who are not getting the benefit.

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Working families in Ontario are not seeing the benefit of that tax scheme. That's why only the NDP are going to provide the real alternative to the Mike Harris agenda. It's only the NDP who are going to reverse that tax scheme for the most wealthy in the province, that top 6% who are benefiting the most from the tax cut. We know this government is really just catering to the big guys, their big corporate friends, their Bay Street buddies. Those are the people who are benefiting big time. Those are the people who are going to benefit from this government's privatization agenda in the event that they do get re-elected for a second term. What we are going to see is the privatization of health care in Ontario. That is what the NDP is going to be campaigning against in the upcoming election.

One of the things that really struck me in the throne speech was the mention of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act committee, and that act generally. I guess if there was one positive element of that mention, that was the fact that it got mentioned at all. When I speak to people in my community like Dean Labute, who is the chair of the Windsor-Essex Ontarians with Disabilities Act committee, he expresses to me his complete disappointment that this government, when they had an opportunity to introduce legislation that had some real teeth, some real protection for the most vulnerable in our community, an opportunity to provide benefit for those persons with disabilities, protection for those persons, completely abandoned that responsibility, and when they had the chance in the throne speech to say that they were going to introduce a meaningful Ontarians with Disabilities Act, they abandoned that responsibility and instead said only that they were going to consult further. But at least they

recognized that the legislation they had introduced last November, Bill 83, was fundamentally flawed. It wasn't going to provide the protection that persons with disabilities were looking for, it wasn't going to assist the most vulnerable in our community, and it wasn't going to provide them with the opportunities they were looking for in transportation, in education and in health care. The government had an opportunity to say clearly that they were going to introduce legislation, but they didn't do that.

The throne speech also mentioned that the Mike Harris government is going to run on its environmental record in the campaign — an environmental record that they can be nothing but ashamed of. That's according to the Environmental Commissioner, who I am proud to say was brought in by the previous NDP government. I was part of the committee that was involved in the hiring of the Environmental Commissioner. I was also the parliamentary assistant to Minister Bud Wildman, who brought in the Environmental Bill of Rights, legislation that was so progressive, so beneficial to the environment in the province of Ontario that even though I know the Mike Harris government would like to get rid of it, they would not do it. They couldn't do it.

Each year, the Environmental Commissioner issues a report to this Legislature that is incredibly critical of the Mike Harris government's record on the environment. We've seen from the time the NDP was in government that fines for polluters have gone down. After years of increased fines to big corporate polluters, now the trend is in the other direction, and we know why it's going in that direction. One is because they have been gutting the enforcement capabilities of the Ministry of the Environment. We've seen the ministry itself cut by over 40%. We've seen the Windsor regional office reduced by half from its former self. It used to be an important office in southwestern Ontario. It no longer has that important distinction. It has seen the enforcement officers reduced; their capabilities to monitor and enforce environmental laws have been reduced. We need to see that Ministry of the Environment office in Windsor restored to its previous staffing levels so we can deal with the issue of water pollution into the Detroit River and into Lake St Clair and we can deal with air pollution sources in our community.

We've heard a lot from this government about their Drive Clean program. For years they've been talking about this as their big environmental plank, but it is only now getting underway and it's only going to apply to automobiles. It isn't going to apply to people with big trucks, delivery trucks or buses or other types of construction vehicles, not right now. Why is that?

Yesterday I was with the Boy Scouts in my community planting trees in Malden Park, a former landfill that is now being restored into a beautiful park area. I enjoyed being out there planting trees. I think it's important, as we are celebrating Arbor Week here in Ontario. Friday is Arbor Day and I'm going to be out there planting some more trees. We should all be planting

trees in our communities and I encourage members to do that. But we've seen what is happening to reforestation programs, for example, as a result of the cuts this government has made. Those tree plantings aren't taking place the way they should be. We need to reverse those cuts to the Ministry of Natural Resources and to the Ministry of the Environment as well.

We know that many of those cuts have been brought about in order to satisfy the Mike Harris agenda, their tax scheme agenda. The government likes to brag about how they've cut taxes 69 times, 69 tax cuts. Our research shows that 55 of those tax cuts have been for businesses and only 14 of them have been for ordinary working people in our communities.

It's pretty hard to object to tax cuts, but let's be fair for people. Why is it that some people are getting the biggest benefit from those tax breaks and ordinary working families are not getting it? In fact, those people are having to pay the price for that tax scheme through cuts to health care and through cuts to education.

I have a son who is attending public school. He's in grade 1, just beginning his educational career, so to speak. I am concerned about the direction this government is taking us with respect to education. A lot of the things that have been lifted from the NDP's Royal Commission on Learning and adopted by this government are good, progressive reforms. However, we've seen the cuts from the education budget, which have not been to the benefit of students like my son.

2030

I'm also concerned about children's mental health services in our community. During the long break we had, when I think we should have been here debating the cuts to health care — but we weren't here doing that, debating and talking about those important issues. No, the government didn't want to recall the members of the Legislature. However, it did give me an opportunity to meet with people in our community, people from the Children's Achievement Centre. Our leader, Howard Hampton, was able to attend at the Children's Achievement Centre as well, and we heard from the people in our community who wonder what the benefit of the Mike Harris tax scheme is for kids in need in our community. The Children's Achievement Centre deals with children who have difficulty in a school setting, kids who can't really go to school because they're having difficulties learning, difficulties in paying attention, sometimes are violent and have no other place to attend. There were people from the local children's aid society there, people from the local hospital who treat kids who sometimes find that they can't even go to the Children's Achievement Centre. They have to be hospitalized; that's how much difficulty they're having.

We have seen an incredible need for services for kids in our community, an increase over the last few years, but they don't feel as though their concerns are being addressed, and they're not being addressed because the local office of the Ministry of Community and Social Services says they don't have the funds to attend to the

needs of kids. If you wanted to be cynical about it, you could say that kids aren't getting the services they need because they can't vote. I would say if that is the case, that is a real tragedy, because we know that if you invest in kids the return on that investment later on down the road is going to pay for itself sevenfold.

Mike Harris in the throne speech has said he's finally seen the light. He believes now in early childhood education, as though there was some switch that finally got thrown. When the NDP were talking about improving early childhood education, Mike Harris said that was the stupidest idea he'd ever heard. Now, finally, he's recognizing that early childhood education needs more emphasis, but it's yet to be seen whether that statement is going to actually result in improved services for kids, because the government will say, "We cannot afford to provide those services as long as we are on this single-minded agenda that it's only through the continuation of reducing taxes that we're going to achieve the Ontario we would like," to say that if we somehow were able to get taxes down to zero, Ontario would be greatest place in the world in which to live.

But I understand and I know my friend from Cochrane North understands that through the payment of taxes we are improving the quality of life in our communities. If we all decide that we don't want to pay taxes any longer, then we will not have any community and we won't have that responsibility to ensure that the entire community benefits from the economic productivity of our community.

We do have that obligation, that responsibility to ensure that when our community prospers, everybody prospers, everybody shares, everybody has an equal opportunity to succeed. That is the NDP vision for Ontario.

This government liked to say in the last election campaign, "We're promising tax cuts and these tax cuts aren't going to hurt a bit." People now recognize that this Tory tax scheme wasn't nirvana. We weren't all just going to get a big tax break and be able to spend it in any way we wanted. There are some people who are getting a bigger benefit than others and there are others who just have to deal with the cuts — the cuts to health care and to education — cuts that the Liberals seem to agree with because they're not going to reverse the Tory tax scheme. At least the NDP says that we're going to reverse the tax scheme for those who are the wealthiest and reinvest in health care, in education and in environmental standards and enforcement, and improve the communities in which we live instead of providing a tax break for those who are the most well off, those who really need it the least.

We need to ensure that we have a strong, vibrant public education and public health care scheme here in Ontario. People recognize the need for that. They recognize that's the only way we're going to have equal opportunity for everyone in Ontario, and we'll all share from our prosperity.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments or questions?

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): It's a pleasure to respond to the member for Windsor-Riverside. It was a little more thoughtful speech than we heard from a seatmate of his earlier, the one from Sault Ste Marie, that was all doom and gloom. At least he stayed on track.

I was interested in particular in his comments about the environmental record and I'd like to walk through some of the things our government has been doing. Before I go into that, I would like to remind him that the Minister of Environment and Energy just prior to our government, in the person of Mr Wildman, had approximately 30 staff members on staff, personal political staff. We went in to see those offices and I can vouch for it, and certainly a lot of the civil servants also told me he had that many on staff. The present Minister of the Environment has less than 10. That's how we cut back — by leadership — and I think he should be very aware of that.

Take, for example, what we did with Lands for Life. We established some 12% of the province set aside, and your leader said it couldn't be done. He stood up and told our Premier — your leader, who used to be the Minister of Natural Resources, along with Mr Wildman, who also was Minister of Natural Resources once upon a time. We've also set aside a special fund to look after wildlife habitat. All the fishing licences and hunting licences and fines go into that. We've returned the 75% taxes to the managed woodlot, which is something your government took away. We've also recognized conservation lands.

Now we get into truly the Minister of the Environment: We've brought in the Drive Clean program, the guidelines for waste-to-energy incinerators and the guidelines for landfill sites. The guidelines for contaminated sites have been updated. We also have brought in many bills, but one in particular was the one on enhanced environmental protection that has significantly raised the fines to ensure that this province will be properly protected by —

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

Mr Michael Brown: I'm happy to make some comments on the member for Windsor-Riverside's presentation. The member for Northumberland, though, piqued my interest a little bit. I just wonder, with all of that, how is it that this is the third-worst pollution jurisdiction in North America, if it's going so well?

One thing I want to talk about is the \$100 million of taxpayers' money, probably more than that by now, that has been sent out through the province, stuffing everyone's mail boxes full of pictures of Premier Mike and all that kind of good stuff. They must have made a mistake, though. It says, "Report to taxpayers, spring 1999." It shows here — there's a really nice chart. Actually it's jars of loonies, I think. It says, "Average family after-tax income" — guess what? It says right here — you can't see this on television, no doubt — but it's down \$1,200 per family since 1989. In the last 10 years our families have lost \$1,200 of purchasing power, each and every

one of them. I ask the people of Ontario, "Who were the government during those 10 years from 1989?"

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): It's come up.

Mr Michael Brown: It's down \$1,200 since 1989.

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Mr Len Wood: I want to congratulate the member for Windsor-Riverside on pointing out that the throne speech we heard last week is no more than a gimmick. It's to pull the wool over a whole bunch of people's eyes and pretend that no election has been called. But in reality, even before the throne speech was read out, everybody knew that the election campaign is on.

Let's get real. Four years ago Mike Harris went out and promised everybody, "There's a big pot of gold, there's hidden money at Queen's Park, and I can give this money back to the people." Lo and behold, we find out that they have to take billions of dollars out of health care, billions of dollars out of education, billions of dollars out of the communities. As far as protection of the environment is concerned, if you look at Cochrane North, which I'm representing right now, and the new riding I will be representing after the next election, Timiskaming-Cochrane, what this Conservative government has done is try to destroy northern Ontario by creating a huge landfill site in the Adams mine.

The Minister of the Environment is saying: "We don't care. We'll issue a permit that they can dump all this raw garbage into the mine site there." Eventually, within a year, we're going to see this bubbling up all over the place, polluting the Sturgeon River and the areas all down towards North Bay. We know it's going to happen; we know it's going to take millions of dollars to clean up. Why would the Mike Harris government want to do this, knowing that they're going down to defeat because of the destruction they did to health care, education, the communities, the environment?

The NDP is the only party that is committed to rolling back the Mike Harris income tax cut for the wealthiest people in this province, putting it into health care, education, communities and the environment, clearly on the side of the people in this province, as we want to be.

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): The member opposite made a reference to the third-worst record on environmental pollutants in the atmosphere. What he refused and what he failed to mention was that that was based on data compiled between 1985 and 1995. To the people of Ontario: Remember which governments were in office between the years 1985 and 1995 — the Liberal and NDP governments. That should be noted.

The member opposite talked about government ads and I would also let people at home know that we're still spending less on any kind of advertising than either one of those governments did when they were in office. Advertising — or, I would say, the information we're giving to the people of Ontario, because with a lot of the stuff that we're giving people, a lot of the cost is people calling in and saying: "We want more information. Please send us more information." The members opposite would have us deny the people of Ontario the

information they're requesting. But the cost of sending that out is in our cost. Members opposite, when we send that out it is information. It's a description of what's been happening in certain issue areas.

I recall that on my fridge, oh, about a month ago, I happened to notice a red and white fridge magnet. It was a tooth with a toothbrush beside it. I said, "What the heck?" I went and looked and it said, "Elinor Caplan, Minister of Health." I said, "Where did this come from?" The Liberals, when Elinor Caplan was the Minister of Health back in the late 1980s, printed thousands of fridge magnets with a tooth and toothbrush on them.

That's just one example, but I ask you: Where the heck is the informational value there? What the heck were you doing back then, fellows? Think about it.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Windsor-Riverside has two minutes to respond.

Mr Lessard: I just want to start out by saying to the member for Niagara Falls that I'm disappointed I didn't get one of those fridge magnets. If he has an extra one, maybe he can send it over.

To the member for Northumberland, to talk about the government's environmental record with pride by saying that their record of achievement is somehow measured by how much staff they could cut from the ministry office I think really talks a lot about this government's environmental record. If that's the sign of success, "How much can we actually gut the ministry?" it's beyond belief. That is just removing the ability for the government to enforce the laws, to monitor the laws, to catch the people who pollute, charge them and make sure they're fined and those fines are collected. But we're not seeing any of that. The sign of success is how many people they can cut out of the ministry.

The other big environmental achievement that he failed to mention was Bill 35, the bill to deregulate Ontario Hydro, a bill which is going to open up the Ontario market to cheap, dirty, coal-fired American power to come into Ontario. We in the southwestern area of the province, in Windsor, are going to get the air pollution. Other parts of Ontario may be able to benefit from cheap power, but we're going to deal with the environmental consequences of that. I say shame.

The member for Cochrane North talked about how Mike Harris in the last election promised that there was this big pot of gold that he was going to deliver to taxpayers in the province. Taxpayers now see there is no easy solution, and they're not going to believe the Liberals either, who have promised increased services and no increase in taxes.

What about the north? Nothing said about them in the —

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. Further debate?

Mr John Hastings (Etobicoke-Rexdale): It's very enlightening, as usual, to be back in this esteemed House listening to some of the material presented by members opposite. I heard the word "alternative," I think from the member for Windsor-Riverside. That's a curious word

because that's the first time I've heard them speak about "alternative" in terms of what they would offer if they were over here. We know what they offered when they were over here in terms of the record deficit and debts they marked up.

I would like to start out by going back some years ago and recalling a chant we used to hear quite frequently from members opposite in question period, day in and day out. I would go back to about September, October, November and December of 1996. The chant and the mantra was, "Where are the jobs, where are the jobs?" because at that point the economy was still reeling from the disastrous decision, an unfortunate decision made by the previous Treasurer, to use the old pump-and-prime method of economics in 1991, when Ontario was probably the only government in North America, or one of the only governments, to put huge tons of money — as the leader of the third party says, just shovelling money into the coal-fired generator to keep things stoked up and going.

When you look back from the consequences of that decision, we're now just getting back in 1999, some eight years later, to having an economic environment that at least has produced jobs. The jobs that have been produced aren't by this government directly but through many of the initiatives and actions taken: in balanced labour legislation, in creating an environment that welcomes new investment into Ontario without subsidies. We did eliminate, much as it's never mentioned by members opposite, the corporate welfare subsidies that were in place in a plethora of programs across the economy of this province.

I just wanted to go back and mention, as it's pointed out in the throne speech, and reiterate the point of the question, "Where are the jobs?" And where are the jobs in 1999? Nearly 540,000 private sector jobs created — quite an accomplishment — by new investment, small business, new entrepreneurs starting up companies across Ontario — even in northern Ontario — home-based businesses.

It brings me to the question we never hear any more — "Where are the jobs?" — because we have satisfied in part, that question. But it leads me to a very critical analysis I have to make of our members opposite, especially in the official opposition. What I'm talking about when I'm reminded of this question — "Where are the jobs?" — what did we hear as a result of the collapse of the mayor of the city of Toronto's proposal put forth about a year ago called Technodome? Technodome was to be a rather adventurous, huge tourist attraction for the city of Toronto in North York. It would have dealt with a whole set of interesting things like a 100,000-square-foot playground for kids with its own chocolate factory. There would have been a whole plethora of sports: hockey rinks, basketball courts, volleyball, Olympic swimming pool and Olympic diving facilities, which we need for the 2008 Olympics should we be fortunate to win that bid.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Disneyland right in the heart of your community.

Mr Hastings: You can call it Disneyland if you want, but the point is that there were a pile of jobs connected to this proposal, nearly 35,000 jobs — construction jobs, full, time good-paying jobs — that we lost thanks to the co-operation of the Canada Lands Company in Ottawa, a magnificent group that doesn't even have the intestinal fortitude to work with Toronto to bring this thing about.

Where did Technodome go, even if you don't agree with the largeness of the proposal? It ends up, unfortunately, in Montreal, in the province of Quebec, and what do we hear from members opposite on this particular proposal? Not one word, not in their platform, where they call it something like the 20/20 jobs of the future; it sounds more like a replay of the future or a nightmare. That is 35,000 jobs, construction and other jobs — no word from any of the members that I spotted from the city of Toronto or from the leader of the official opposition — jobs that we need. But oh no, that's not important.

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Do you know why Canada Lands Company wouldn't co-operate? Because they want to keep the land in perpetuity, so the thing dies and it moves to Montreal thanks to a lot of federal and provincial private sector investment: monies from the Caisse de dépôt and other institutions in Quebec, and what do we have for it from the Liberal Party of Ontario? Nothing. Zero. Not one intervention. I'd like to know and hear from the members opposite whether the leader of the official opposition even sent a letter to his cohorts in Ottawa to see if we could work with the mayor of Toronto to get this thing on the go.

I don't agree with all the stuff surrounding it, but at least it was a solid proposal and the proponents worked on this for over a year, and yet we hear nothing from the silent lambs opposite. Yet they were the ones who were always asking back three years ago, "Where are the jobs?" Well, 35,000 of those jobs have gone to Montreal. God bless them for at least having the political acuity and a little more political muscle perhaps, because a large number of the Quebec members are there to make sure they get their largesse from the federal government, and it worked again. That's not an anti-Quebec statement I'm making, so I'm anticipating. If that's what they try to place this on, they're not exactly correct.

Mr Patten: Of course it is.

Mr Hastings: Well, if it makes no sense, then why would you not at least fight for Toronto to have these jobs, and for the construction industry? It's like your same approach in pooh-poohing of what the Premier in this government has been trying to do to at least balance out the teeter-totter between the construction industry in Quebec and in Ontario, and to this day we still haven't got a sound agreement.

Where's the federal government when it's championing interprovincial trade in these areas? It's leaving it all to the provinces to fight out, and what does it cost us? Again, tons of money and the loss of well-paid jobs, not only in the construction industry but in the supplier-

related industries all across eastern Ontario and right down into the engine of southwestern and central Ontario. I simply wanted to put on the record that whole thing about, "Where are the jobs?"

Secondly, I was listening today with some interest, curiosity, passing strange, that in the proposals by the Leader of the Opposition when he unveiled his new election plan for Ontario, the future, so to speak, 20 years out, I guess, we were looking at the statements in here regarding property assessment and the whole issue of tax relief. We know where members opposite stand generally on tax relief. It says their priorities of spending: health care and education. Who would not agree that those are the priority areas for making sure we have money well spent, getting good value and getting some results out of the programs of those two official strategic areas of the economy and of our quality of life?

But what I found interesting was that there won't be any tax relief from the members opposite, the official opposition, should they ever have the chance to be on this side again, because tax relief generally, both opposition parties agree, is not a very good thing, yet when you look at their brethren parties across the country, even in British Columbia of all places, they recognize the value of some tax relief across the board, pretty minimalist as it is. Basically all we get opposite is criticism that a tax reduction or some money in people's pockets is not a very good idea, because how they would know how to spend their own money or save it or invest it? That's a pretty damning indictment of how you look at what people are capable of doing with their own intelligence and insight.

Generally, tax relief from the members opposite won't come until the economy grows. What do you think it's been doing for the last five years? Not growing? If you look at our official stats from Statistics Canada, much as you sometimes wonder about their statistical reliability, we have had at least a 3% economic growth rate, so we're going to have to continue that into the new millennium, but to get your new economic growth you need an environment of low taxes, not high taxes, because if a high-tax regime is the way to go — when we won in 1995 we should have inherited a situation where there were hardly any problems: no debt, no deficits, all kinds of money to spend, more money to spend on health care and education. But that wasn't the reality. The reality was there was about \$100 billion in debt and nearly \$12 billion in deficit.

Members opposite commonly talk about the concept that if you give tax relief to people, somehow or other they're not going to help stimulate the economy, yet those folks across the way are strong adherents of the economists of the early 20th century, Keynes in particular. So there is a bit of a cross-contradiction within their opposition, or the reluctance at least to recognize the significance of tax relief and tax stimulation to economic growth. All you have to do is look at most of your states and countries of Europe, even of Asia. Where they have a low-tax regime, generally speaking their

economic growth rates are higher than those countries that have high-tax regimes.

Let me come to the part of tax relief that the members opposite clearly, vigorously and consistently opposed for the last four years and that is the tax relief connected to the property tax reforms we introduced through the Fair Municipal Finance Act. Members opposite opposed at every twist and turn all those bills that dealt with low tax relief on property taxes. When we look at where it applied all you have to do is look within the city of Toronto, in the suburban areas. What has happened?

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Even with this city council, if you're critical of some of its decisions, it got two things right in the city of Toronto. It put a tax cap on the commercial and industrial costs of education. But it also did something else: It brought about some modest tax relief for hard-pressed property owners in my particular riding and in a lot of ridings across Metro Toronto. How much was it? About \$150 to \$200, depending on the location, depending on the type of property and depending on how long they had lived there.

If we applied their logic on this particular issue and said we should never have any kind of property assessment reform, as the member for Scarborough-Agincourt so vigorously opposed every time — the member for Oakwood away back was in favour of it in 1983, but suddenly, by 1999, said, "This is the worst thing possible," and went out and paraded and said: "We don't need to have any changes anywhere because everything is good the way it is. It's pretty effective."

If you were one of those who would have been affected by some kind of tax increase, God bless. We wouldn't want to have any kind of equity and fairness brought into the system. Finally, we do. But according to their assessment of things, if we kept everything the way it is, people in Scarborough, people in Etobicoke, a large population of North York, East York particularly and even some parts of the city of Toronto in the downtown, I'm finding out, did experience very effective numbers in terms of tax relief.

I've talked to some people who have received up to \$1,000 in property assessment relief. According to these folks, you keep everything the way it is and you could end up actually forgoing any monies you would have had. That's what happened when we had members of the Rae government holding committee hearings in November 1993 while in the cabinet room they were making a backroom deal up there with the folks who would have been affected.

We ended up with no market value or current value assessment. We went by for another six years, which cost a large amount of money to residential property owners in the city of Toronto and other parts of Ontario — \$3,000, \$4,000, \$5,000. "But what's that? What do you need that money for? That belongs to the state." That's their approach to thinking.

It's interesting to note their proposals on education. I see the member of the opposition has already written a

cheque to the colleges and universities as they need more money to operate. Let me tell you, folks: In point of fact, you can talk to some of the community college presidents in this great province and, while they acknowledge they have had some challenging times dealing with the reductions we made, they have improved the operating efficiencies of their institutions.

Not only that. What is significant in this whole area of reform of post-secondary education — without even moving in that area except reducing the amount of money and reinvesting it in strategic areas such as engineering and computer science — is that some of the community colleges are rating in the city of Toronto, across the Toronto region, 70%-plus student satisfaction rates. Even in the old city of Toronto, George Brown College registered 58%. Humber College in Etobicoke registered 71%. Students passing and getting a job — that's forgotten in the proposals of the 20/20 nightmare that have been outlined by the leader of the official opposition.

You just pour the money in, but don't ask for much in the way of results. We heard him today mention that yes, there were going to be ropes assigned to these conditions and one of them was that they'd have a report card. Oh, OK, so you have a report card and the report card says you've got X programs with Y students graduating but they didn't end up getting a job. You can count a good number of programs in the community colleges that they have eliminated because they couldn't find job placements for their students. It's not fair to a student to pay \$6,000, \$8,000 or \$10,000, or any amount of money, if they know that there is less than a minimal guarantee or prospect even of getting a job interview, let alone a job. You don't keep programs and award institutions, even the universities, for programs that can't move them into jobs.

When I talk about jobs, we're talking about the liberal arts as well because the large companies today still favour people who can think creatively and strategically. They are valued programs but there has to be some linkage back, but that's not mentioned in the plan by members opposite. They just want to fork out more money.

They talk about accountability but there's nothing in there like we're probably moving to in the future across this country and in Ontario: fiscal accountability linked back to job performance, job placement, customer satisfaction. My goodness, I think it's a bizarre concept for some members opposite who were very critical when the former Minister of Education brought up that idea years ago. Somehow or other you never connect the two. In the real world you do connect the two.

In conclusion, in terms of education at the post-secondary level and many of the reforms that we've made at the elementary and secondary schools, we are going to end up in this province in the next few years with a learning rigour, with a learning curriculum that is going to put our students far ahead of many of the students in other provinces and other nations in the world. Why?

Because we're measuring them. We've got a standard curriculum and that's where we're moving into the 21st century.

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Patten: I appreciate the opportunity to respond to the comments from the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale, whom I truly appreciate, I think more than many of the members on this side do. They tend to be quite adamant about some of his outbursts and everything, but I think he often provides very thoughtful comments and so I will react to them, I hope, on a thoughtful basis.

He talked first of all, in terms of the throne speech, about the great declaration that 500-odd jobs have been created —

Mr Baird: That's 500,000.

Mr Patten: Five hundred thousand jobs have been created in Ontario over the last four years, although the target was 750,000 jobs guaranteed. Then, of course, Mike Harris would take full credit for this; nothing to do with the great drive that's happening south of us by the United States economy, nothing to do with the federal government and its particular control of balancing its budget and also limiting interest rates, making it easier for businesses to borrow and providing a much more stable community. You never give any credit on that particular side, which I think is due.

You mention the whole area of taxes. I must tell you — I only have a very brief time — I've been out in my riding, as I'm sure you have too, and I've talked to a lot of small business people. Their number one issue is their property tax. Nine bills later, the Harris government has still put it to a lot of small businesses. A lot of small businesses have gone out of business now and they need some support for stability and a fair share. Why? Because in your concept of fairness with big business, a big bank tower and a small business are going to pay the same rate. It doubles the rate for taxes for small business and it halves the rate for a big bank that's made \$2 billion a year. You call that fair? We don't.

Mr Len Wood: Briefly, I want to comment on the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale. It's quite clear to me and to the 11 million people out in this province that the 1999 election campaign is on. It was called when Mike Harris decided to deliver his throne speech. The NDP knows that the election is on. As I said before, 11 million people in this province know from the \$100 million that has been spent on advertising by the Conservative Party and the government that they've been out campaigning for a long time.

They also know the promise Mike Harris made four years ago: "There's a big pot of gold out there and I can give money back to the rich people in this province." We've found out now that the pot of gold was not there. In order to give the \$6 billion in tax cuts to the 6% of the wealthiest people in this province, they had to cut \$2 billion out of health care, \$1.5 billion out of education and billions of dollars from the environment and the communities. People are well aware of this.

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In the throne speech, although the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale is pleased with it, there was not one mention of northern Ontario. There was no mention of the fact that thousands of people were thrown out of work because of the cancellation of the spring bear hunt. The lands for strife is going to cause nothing but heartaches down the road when you create more park land, take land away from active production and eliminate jobs.

Everybody knows we're the only party that is prepared to make a commitment to roll back the Mike Harris 30% tax cut that was given to the wealthiest people in Ontario. We will roll that back and we will spend that \$1.5 billion for health care, education and communities. Northern Ontario is short 200 doctors. We need 200 doctors in northern Ontario, not one word about it in the throne speech at all.

Mr Galt: I was particularly impressed with the presentation made by the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale. He talked about some of the difficult decisions that this government has made, decisions that were absolutely necessary, decisions to bring forth a strong economy, the creation of jobs and creation of prosperity here in Ontario so we can afford our health programs, our health care that's so important to us. He also talked about leadership and the kind of strong leadership that this party has had. Thank heavens we've had Mike Harris as our Premier, as the leader of this party. It has certainly been the kind of focused leadership this province so desperately needed after 10 years of wandering in circles, just totally lost in an economic desert.

I thought it was particularly interesting that the member for Cochrane North talked about a pot of gold. I can understand why they'd be upset that are a few dollars being given out, but let me tell you where the pot of gold came from. We finally got some of the health dollars returned from the federal Liberals. The health dollars were 50-cent dollars back in 1968 when the Canada Health Act came in. That deteriorated to 7.6%. With the recent announcements of the federal Liberals, it's going all the way up to 11%. It is those dollars that Ontario promised to spend on health care, and that is exactly where those dollars are going, to health care. That's what the recent announcements have been all about, Liberal dollars finally flowing to Ontario. I can appreciate your being very upset over it but nevertheless I compliment the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale for just an excellent presentation.

Mr Michael Brown: I'm pleased to make some comments on the presentation from the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale. I think it's interesting. Here we are 10 years later, 1989 to 1999. What has happened? We have a debt that has roughly tripled from the 1989 budget year. Imagine, 300%. We borrowed more? This government alone has increased the debt of Ontario by 26%. What has happened out there on Main Street? We find that people are making \$1,200 less, taking home, on

average, per family, \$1,200 less now in 1999 than they were in 1989.

What else has happened? We have one out of every five hospitals closing. We have the lowest number of nurses per capita in the country. We're behind everybody else. That's what has happened in Ontario in the last 10 years. We have a government that wants to market its way to re-election, spending \$100 million — my friend tells me it's \$109 million — on pamphlets so they can be in your mailbox, so every time you turn on the radio you can hear Premier Mike, so every time you turn on the TV set you can see Premier Mike making the tough decisions.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order, I can't hear the speaker. I have to be able to hear, but I don't have to have all you people here.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): I just got here and I want to understand what he's talking about

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Grey-Owen Sound, come to order.

Mr Michael Brown: I was just trying to point out what has happened in Ontario in the last 10 years: triple the debt, lower average per family income and health care that is chancy at best. That's what has happened. With that, I will wait for the reply from the member for Etobicoke-Rexdale.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Etobicoke-Rexdale has two minutes to respond.

Mr Hastings: I'd like to thank the members for Ottawa Centre, Cochrane North and Northumberland as well as Algoma regarding our presentation of ideas. To be fair to the member for Ottawa Centre, yes, the federal government did help bring about the economic environment we're in. But I have to also remind him that it was at the expense of this province and \$6 billion taken out of our health care that we're now getting back. It was \$6 billion, yes, when you count up the numbers over those years.

There's another thing the member failed to mention. He didn't respond to our concern over the loss of the Technodome. He hasn't made any comments about our red tape initiatives. If the feds would do even one tenth of what we have tried to do through the Red Tape Commission in this province in terms of getting job barriers down and job creation up, we'd have a lot more jobs across this country, particularly when you look at youth unemployment and the countless proposals made by the opposition parties in Ottawa to at least reduce the amount of UI per hundred dollars of payroll but to no avail, and particularly for young people, for employers who would hire those folks and not pay any UI premiums whatsoever, that would be really a major economic initiative if the feds would catch on and do it instead of gathering in the money.

Finally, I would like to congratulate an unspoken hero in this House who has worked very hard to bring about jobs in this province. That's the member for Eglinton, our former Minister of Economic Development, Trade and

Tourism, as he heads up Ontario Exports, because we know that one out of every four jobs in this province is trade related in one way or another. He has demonstrated exemplary leadership in getting the job creation —

2120

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. Further debate?

Mr Cleary: I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the throne speech on behalf of the residents of the Cornwall area. Over the past few years, I have been contacted by countless residents who have expressed their concerns about health care and restructuring of the hospital situation, especially when Mike Harris, in his 1995 campaign, had no plans to close hospitals, not to mention that the day the announcement was made, the restructuring commission said that probably within four or five years we'll need another new hospital.

Cornwall hospital administrators are having a tough time adjusting to the new hospital plans, and the community has been split right down the middle. Together with the cutbacks in health care funding, the patients are paying the price. The throne speech said, "Health care we can depend on." I would like you to tell Mr MacDermid, a constituent of mine. The health care cuts are life and death issues. Mr MacDermid was diagnosed with an abdominal aortic aneurysm in July 1998. The aneurysm has now grown to the size that it has become vital that Mr MacDermid undergo surgery immediately. With the nursing cuts at the Ottawa hospital where he's going to have the surgery, he's told that his surgery could possibly be another two or three months away. This is unacceptable with the amount of growth in the aneurysm.

If the surgery doesn't happen very soon, Mr MacDermid will have a real problem. I have contacted the minister on two occasions, and I have had no response. This is how the Harris government manages health care, by cutting \$800 million out of hospital funding, firing nurses and refusing patients like Mr MacDermid.

I would also like to mention Mr Clayton Lessard. Try to tell him that we've got a good system in place at the present time. And try to tell the Len Marsolais family. Len has passed away. He couldn't get the treatment he needed when he needed it. Yet the government — they tell us what a great government this is — increased the debt some \$22 billion in four years.

Mr William Saunderson (Eglinton): Come on, that's not right.

Mr Cleary: It's a fact. It's true.

I would like to talk a little bit more about the Quebec government and the Ontario government. I would just like to read a resolution that I have supported and my council in the city of Cornwall has supported. It says:

"And whereas Cornwall city council, as recently as September 9, 1996, supported Bill 60 introduced by MPP Jean-Marc Lalonde to eliminate unfair practices in the construction industry;

"Therefore, be it resolved that Cornwall city council likewise prohibit Quebec companies from bidding on city

of Cornwall capital projects until such time as the government of Quebec removes its barriers to out-of-province construction workers and building contractors."

Mr Patten: What was the date of that?

Mr Cleary: That was on September 9, 1996.

Then there's the resolution they passed last night in which several members of council pointed out that they're pleased that the province has followed through, as city hall had been pushing Queen's Park to take action for many years. The motion was passed Monday night. Cornwall specifically has no choice but to take this action to support Ontario construction workers. I was pleased. They have been very supportive of that all along.

I want to mention a few other things here too about the turmoil, especially in the rural schools and the schools in my area, with the lack of staff and special education programs and school closures that are ruining the community. In many areas, especially in the rural part, the school is not only used for education purposes but is also the community centre, recreation facility and meeting place. If these schools are closed, it will cut the heart right out of my community.

In my municipal days, the first thing that people who were moving into my community would say is, "Where will my children go to school?" That was why they located there, so their children could go to a school close to home.

Some time ago, the Upper Canada District School Board held preliminary discussions on how to fix the mess the Harris government created in education in our area and has developed a series of recommendations which are outlined in its School Accommodation Study. In the report, the board suggests that the education ministry change its policies with respect to school board eligibility for new pupil places. The board believes the ministry should apply its 80% utilization provisions for school operations and school renewal to grants for new pupil places for school boards where students are spread over a large geographic area. The board is struggling to fix and adjust problems over which it has control, but it states that the Harris government must assist in addressing problems where the solutions are beyond the board's control and capacity.

Mr Saunderson: Mr Speaker, on a point of order: I would like to correct something that's been said. This government inherited an accumulated deficit of \$100 billion, not the \$22 billion that he recognized. I want to get that in tonight because I think it's misinformation.

The Deputy Speaker: That is not a point of order.

Mr Cleary: Finally, in the throne speech we heard quite a lot about this government patting itself on the back regarding job creation. The government loves to take all the credit when new jobs are created but the actual reason is the booming American economy and low interest rates. They're just a partner in what's happening.

In my area and across Ontario we have a strike with Bell Canada technicians. I received a fax from Mr Edward Burns of Cornwall who is currently on strike and is eager to have discussions take place to end the strike as

quickly as possible. Many residents in my area support him and want to know if the government would have any advice on how to get them back to the bargaining table as there have been no discussions since April 9 and no plans are scheduled.

The government has created turmoil in health care and education, and is spending over \$100 million in self-serving government ads to try to buy an election. That would provide a lot of health care and home care to some of our residents who've had their health care needs cut.

I was kind of disappointed in the throne speech. There was no mention at all of agriculture anywhere in the speech. I just got corrected on a few things a minute ago. The second-biggest creator of jobs in this province and nothing at all mentioned about agriculture. But the government can't cover up the fact —

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I think we're out of time. This House stands adjourned until 1:30 o'clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2129.

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Government
Publications



No. 4A

N° 4A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 28 April 1999

Mercredi 28 avril 1999



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 28 April 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 28 avril 1999

*The House met at 1333.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

ROUGE VALLEY

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): In March 1990, the Liberal government in Ontario formally declared the Rouge area a park. Since then, subsequent governments have seen the wisdom of protecting and expanding the Rouge, the largest urban park in North America.

Although cabinet ministers are ready for photo ops in the Rouge, when it comes to assisting my constituents who live in the Rouge area, the Minister of Municipal Affairs is nowhere to be seen. In October 1998, my constituents Doreen and Clyde Mount wrote to the Minister of Municipal Affairs asking for his assistance. He has not responded. They are owners of private property in the Rouge who have had their hands tied by red tape.

There are three problems. First, since their house and property are on the Rouge, they are not able to make any expansion to their property; it must stay exactly as is. Secondly, buyers are aware of these restrictions and will not buy the house and property. Thirdly, the government will not buy their home and land. These owners are not able to expand their home, nor can they sell it. They have become boxed in. In the six months since the minister was contacted, Mr and Mrs Mount have not received a response.

To refresh the minister's memory, I am sending a copy of the letter to the minister. I hope that between all the campaigning and the propaganda announcements they have, he will find some time to respond to my constituents.

There are four property owners in the same predicament. I am calling on this government to act today.

DAY OF MOURNING

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): Today, on injured workers day, I rise to join with people from across this province to mourn fallen workers, workers who have died on the job, to extend sympathy to workers who have been injured on the job and to express solidarity with their friends and with their co-workers.

We set aside this day in Ontario to honour all of those who have died in workplace accidents or from occupational disease, but it's important that we honour them every day by fighting for the rights of all working women and men, not only the right to have a healthy and safe workplace, which of course is paramount for all of us, to know that we can count on our surroundings to be a place of safety, to be a place where we can carry out our work without risk of harm, but we also fight, in the New Democratic Party, to ensure that workers have the right to organize without fear, to earn fair wages, to have successor rights, to be free from the threat of scab labour, things that this government has stripped from workers in Ontario. It has systematically attacked workers in Ontario.

We rise today to join in the slogan that says, "Today we mourn, tomorrow we organize and fight." There's a big tomorrow, called "an election," in this province and together with workers we'll be organizing and we'll be fighting.

BELLEVILLE BULLS

Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte): It is with great pride that I rise in the House today to congratulate the hometown heroes, Junior A hockey's Belleville Bulls. For the first time since 1986 the Belleville Bulls are in the race for the Memorial Cup and the people of Quinte couldn't be more excited. Then again, the Bulls have provided hockey fans in the Quinte area with plenty of excitement on and off the ice for the past 19 years.

Nothing is more exciting in hockey than the Great One, Wayne Gretzky, who for a brief time was a part owner of the Belleville Bulls.

Of course, there was Belleville's last trip to the playoffs that ended in 8-6 points, lost to Guelph. That year Guelph went on to triumph over Portland to take home the Memorial Cup in the only year the cup was played outside Canada.

The loss is all but forgotten now as the Bulls, led by team captain Ryan Ready, take on the London Knights. Coach Lou Crawford is sure to have plenty of plans to stymie the opposition and goalie Cory Campbell promises to make himself a target the Knights just won't miss.

I want to congratulate team owner Dr Robert Vaughan and all the players and staff for the great season and wish them the best of luck in the playoffs. I'd also like to congratulate Brian Campbell from the Ottawa 67s on winning the Red Tilson award as the league's most

valuable player, as it was announced at city hall in Belleville just a few moments ago. Congratulations, Bulls, and may the best team win.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): The cutbacks to health care by this government have had an immediate and drastic impact on the patients who need emergency rooms. Our paramedics need more hospital emergency rooms. The potential exists for patients to die. Recently, half of the city's emergency rooms have been turning away patients at an alarming rate, leaving paramedics scrambling to find available beds.

Toronto Ambulance Services general manager Ron Kaluski told the city's emergency and protective services committee they're being forced to negotiate access to health care for their patients. He said emergency rooms have been closed and they've added 11 minutes to the average time it takes an ambulance to respond to an emergency. "The potential exists," he repeats, "for patients to die."

In a recent case, paramedics were forced to pronounce a patient dead themselves after spending two and a half hours trying to find a hospital to do it. They wound up taking their patient to a morgue instead of a hospital. This is a city-wide problem but it tends to concentrate itself in the west end, west of Yonge Street. The west end is the most underserved area in Metro.

That's why the headlines are urgent. It says that on a recent Monday night every one of the eight emergency wards in the city's west end was closed. That's why we need help. That's why we've had eight demonstrations. The residents are fed up, they're disgruntled and they're bitter. We're asking the Harris government — we're saying this today — to ensure that Northwestern hospital stays open.

SATELLITE SERVICES

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): Today I'll be introducing a petition signed by over 4,000 residents of Windsor and Essex county calling on the Mike Harris government to provide the necessary funding to establish and staff a satellite treatment centre for local children diagnosed with cancer.

Such treatment is now only provided in London and in Toronto. The financial and emotional burden placed on these children and their families can be devastating. It's hard to imagine how families with two or three children, with both parents working, having to take time off to travel, can cope.

Dr Ethan Laukkanen from the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre estimates that it would cost a mere \$100,000 a year to staff a centre in Windsor. Space is already available.

This isn't just a matter of dealing with cancer. This is a matter of how we care for our kids. If this government had any sympathy for kids with cancer, any compassion

whatsoever, they would provide the funding necessary for a satellite clinic in Windsor.

Thanks to Ken Bondy, chair of the CAW Windsor regional environment council, for the tireless work he has been doing on this initiative and in pointing out the causes of cancer, whether in the workplace or in the environment. Too many people have died from exposure to carcinogens in the workplace. On this national day of mourning for workers killed on the job we must remember them, and children with cancer in our community as well.

1340

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): I rise in the House today to reflect for a moment on what is for me perhaps the most satisfying achievement of my political career: the announcement that Runnymede Hospital will be rebuilt and will receive 200 long-term-care beds.

I remind the House that it was the Liberal government of David Peterson that promised my community \$20 million for a desperately needed new facility if we raised \$10 million. We raised the \$10 million and, just as quickly, the Liberal government forgot its promise. Sadly, the NDP government of Bob Rae showed no greater integrity. It also made the same promise and it also broke its promise. Two governments in a row made a solemn promise to the patients of Runnymede and my community and each, in succession, callously broke those promises.

For more than a decade, the patients of Runnymede, their families, the staff and the community have needlessly had to live under a dark cloud of uncertainty, but thanks to Premier Harris and Minister Jackson that dark cloud of uncertainty has been blown away. Thanks to the Harris government, a wonderful, new future has been guaranteed to Runnymede, including sufficient funding to ensure a state-of-the-art new facility and a level of care that will be determined by the needs of each individual patient.

To the patients of Runnymede and their families and to the superb and dedicated staff and supportive community, I offer my profound thanks for rallying around Runnymede. Our efforts have been rewarded, and along with each of you, I look forward to the construction of the new and improved Runnymede.

EDUCATION

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Yesterday at a news conference the Ontario Secondary School Students' Association released their post-Bill 160 survey. Of no surprise to many of us who have followed education issues, they said that class sizes were higher, they said there was less support for extracurricular activities and they said that students are worried about school closures.

This is probably one of the largest post-Bill 160 surveys of its kind among all the student populations in Ontario, from an organization representing all high school students in Ontario. Worst of all, the students are stressed because of the chaos the government created in the classroom, and that as well came out in their survey.

Despite this mess, the Harris government is now pushing through with its changes to Ontario's high schools. It's full steam ahead for Mike Harris. We wonder when the government is going to realize they're putting children's education at risk.

I'd like to put a quote from the president of this organization, Javeed Sukhera, student Premier of Ontario, who says: "Not only did it" — Bill 160 — "act as a trigger for massive labour disputes that still plague many classrooms in the province, but it also made several drastic changes" to the classrooms in the province. "As students we feel that if our education system is of the best quality that it can possibly be, we are being failed."

On that note, I must report that overall their survey reportedly gave Mike Harris an F for his changes to education.

DAY OF MOURNING

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I rise today to advise the House that in Hamilton we held a ceremony at the monument dedicated to injured workers on this the international day of mourning for workers who are injured and have died on the job.

I'm proud to reflect on the fact that Hamilton was the first city in all of Canada to allow such a monument to be placed, not just on city hall property but on a very prominent corner of the city and of city hall, right at the corner of Main and Bay streets, where over 200 people assembled earlier this morning.

My leader, Howard Hampton, along with Mayor Bob Morrow and Hamilton and District Labour Council president Wayne Marston, talked about the fact that far, far too many workers are dying on the job. In fact, in 1998 we looked at 216 workers who died needlessly on the job.

We also commented about the fact that there are far too many people, estimates of upwards of 20,000 workers a year, who are dying from cancer, and it's far too often in Ontario that people are starting to think that dying of cancer is natural. There's nothing natural about dying of cancer, and with the thousands of new chemicals that are being brought into the workplace, people are being exposed to substances not knowing what the long-term impacts are. This is a day the government should hang their head in shame.

AGRICULTURE INDUSTRY

Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): I rise today to commend the Lions Club of Renfrew for another successful farmers' night. Over 200 people attended this event last Thursday which featured an address from the

Honourable Lyle Vanclicf, the federal Minister of Agriculture. I congratulate Lions Club member Rob Briscoe for a job well done.

By holding the meeting in the town of Renfrew, they strengthened the tradition of bringing together rural and urban people to foster a greater understanding of agriculture. The same concept is applied by rural and urban governments which are amalgamating to provide better service at a lower cost. I was also pleased to present Warden Paul Curtis with close to \$1.7 million to further streamline and enhance the provision of services.

We were doubly blessed in Renfrew county for having both the Ontario and federal agriculture ministers there, all in one week. The Honourable Noble Villeneuve and I met with seven leaders of Renfrew county's agricultural community to discuss their concerns about the crop insurance hay and pasture program. We heard of payout discrepancies between farms, concerns about calculation methods, and possible inequities in deadline management. As a result, the minister will review the program and report back shortly.

Tomorrow I look forward to welcoming Senator Eugene Whelan, former Minister of Agriculture, to my riding at the Annprior Lions Club farmers' night.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

CITY OF WINDSOR ACT, 1999

Mrs Pupatello moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr7, An Act respecting the City of Windsor.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

ENDANGERED, THREATENED AND VULNERABLE SPECIES ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LES ESPÈCES VULNÉRABLES, MENACÉES OU EN VOIE DE DISPARITION

Mr Wildman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 16, An Act to revise the Endangered Species Act and to protect Threatened and Vulnerable Species /
Projet de loi 16, Loi révisant la Loi sur les espèces en voie de disparition et visant à protéger les espèces vulnérables et les espèces menacées.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): The act currently provides protection to endangered species of animals and plants. The bill extends this protection to threatened and vulnerable species of animals and plants.

A committee may be established to advise the Minister of Natural Resources as to which species should be declared endangered, threatened or vulnerable and as to

possible recovery plans to ensure survival of these species. The minister may acquire land or enter into land management agreements with a view to protecting designated species and their habitats.

**FAIRNESS IS A TWO-WAY STREET ACT
(CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY), 1999**

**LOI DE 1999 PORTANT QUE LA JUSTICE
N'EST PAS À SENS UNIQUE
(MOBILITÉ DE LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE DANS
L'INDUSTRIE DE LA CONSTRUCTION)**

Mr Flaherty moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act respecting Labour Mobility in the Construction Industry aimed at Restricting Access to Those Taking Advantage of Ontario's Policy of Free Mobility / Projet de loi 17, Loi sur la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre dans l'industrie de la construction visant à restreindre l'accès de ceux qui profitent de la politique de libre mobilité de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**HEALTH CARE ACCOUNTABILITY
AND PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS ACT, 1999**

**LOI DE 1999 SUR L'OBLIGATION
DE RENDRE DES COMPTES
À L'ÉGARD DES SOINS DE SANTÉ
ET SUR LA DÉCLARATION
DES DROITS DES PATIENTS**

Mrs Boyd moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 18, An Act to promote patients' rights and to increase accountability in Ontario's health care system / Projet de loi 18, Loi visant à promouvoir les droits des patients et à accroître l'obligation de rendre des comptes dans le système de soins de santé de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): The bill codifies the rights of the residents of Ontario who receive health care services in the form of a Patients' Bill of Rights and it provides for the appointment of a health care standards commissioner who will perform functions such as participating in the setting of standards. It also provides whistle-blower protection for employees of providers of health care services.

1350

CITY OF OTTAWA ACT, 1999

Mr Guzzo moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr1, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**CHRISTOPHER'S LAW
(SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY), 1999**

**LOI CHRISTOPHER DE 1999
SUR LE REGISTRE
DES DÉLIQUANTS SEXUELS**

Mr Runciman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 19, An Act, in memory of Christopher Stephenson, to establish and maintain a registry of sex offenders to protect children and communities / Projet de loi 19, Loi à la mémoire de Christopher Stephenson visant à créer et à tenir un registre des délinquants sexuels en vue de protéger les enfants et les collectivités.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): This bill, if passed, would provide police with an important tool to help protect all Ontarians, but particularly women and children, from pedophiles, rapists and other sex offenders. I urge all members of the House to support the bill.

FRANCHISE DISCLOSURE ACT, 1999

**LOI DE 1999 SUR LA DIVULGATION
RELATIVE AUX FRANCHISES**

Mr Tsubouchi moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 20, An Act to require fair dealing between parties to franchise agreements, to ensure that franchisees have the right to associate and to impose disclosure obligations on franchisors / Projet de loi 20, Loi obligeant les parties aux contrats de franchisage à agir équitablement, garantissant le droit d'association aux franchisés et imposant des obligations en matière de divulgation aux franchiseurs.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

**STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY
AND RESPONSES**

CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour): I was pleased a moment ago to introduce the Fairness is a Two-way Street Act (Construction Labour Mobility), 1999.

The bill fulfills a key part of the government's promise to level the playing field in construction between Quebec and Ontario in an effort to protect and create construction jobs. If passed, it would place restrictions on contractors and workers from jurisdictions that don't treat Ontario fairly.

For far too long, Ontario residents have faced many barriers when trying to work or carry out business in the

Quebec construction industry. The result has been lost opportunities and lost jobs for Ontario residents. Yet at the same time, Quebec contractors and workers continue to have unrestricted access to Ontario.

This bill is about restoring the balance, it is about jobs and fairness, and it is about a government acting to protect Ontario jobs so that the citizens of this province get a fair crack at making a decent living.

Creating a level playing field with Quebec has been a priority for Premier Harris and this government from day one. In 1996, we negotiated the bilateral agreement with Quebec to better promote the free two-way flow of construction workers and contractors. Despite the agreement, it became clear that full and open access by Ontario construction contractors and workers inside Quebec was still not a reality. So we took further action.

Last December, Premier Harris wrote to Premier Bouchard asking the Quebec government to work with Ontario to remove the barriers. Premier Harris made it clear that the playing field had to be levelled by April 1 or Ontario would take action. Unfortunately, the Quebec government refused to tear down the barriers, despite another three months of discussion.

Keeping his promise, the Premier announced on March 31 that Ontario would level the playing field with Quebec by taking three steps.

First, effective April 1, Quebec construction companies would be prohibited from bidding on all Ontario government construction projects.

Second, effective April 1, Ontario would step up enforcement to ensure absolute compliance with Ontario's health and safety laws, retail sales tax laws, truck safety laws and workers' compensation laws.

I am pleased to report that both these measures are already having a major impact in levelling the playing field. It is already much harder for some Quebec contractors to carry out business in Ontario. Our enforcement crackdown has turned up hundreds of violations of Ontario's laws by Quebec contractors, and Quebec contractors now don't have access to the hundreds of contracts worth millions of dollars being let by the government of Ontario.

The third measure that the Premier unveiled was a promise to introduce legislation that would, if passed, place restrictions on workers and contractors from any jurisdiction that does not treat our workers and our companies fairly. So today we have the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act.

If passed, the act would mean that contractors from jurisdictions that don't treat Ontario fairly would not be allowed to bid on construction projects funded by the Ontario government, including school boards, municipalities and hospitals. And contractors would face other hurdles before they could bid on private construction projects in Ontario. They would have to register with the new jobs protection office, post a \$10,000 security and provide financial statements.

Aggregate haulers from places that don't treat Ontario fairly would be unable to haul aggregate between

construction projects in Ontario. I might add that this has been a particular problem in eastern Ontario with respect to hauling aggregate. We've been assisted in the consultation and support of the bill by the Ottawa-Carleton truckers' association. In the members' gallery today is the president of the association, Dwayne Mosley, and I thank him for being here to support it.

We've also been supported during the consultations and the discussions in eastern Ontario in particular by many of the municipalities. More than 31 municipalities have passed motions supporting the steps being taken by Premier Harris. Today also in the members' gallery is one of the leading municipal leaders in that regard, Brian Coburn, the mayor of Cumberland.

Workers from places that don't treat Ontario fairly would have to prove their work experience and qualifications from both Ontario and Quebec and pay a registration fee.

I would rather not have to introduce this bill. Our clear preference is free labour mobility and open borders. We believe that free trade and labour mobility are vital to the economic growth of both Ontario and Quebec.

That's why I urge the Quebec government to act now to create a level playing field. That way we can dismantle the barriers we've been forced to erect and both provinces can start enjoying the benefits of free trade and open borders.

The draft bill has been public since March 31. This is a 30-year-old problem. It's time for action. I ask the members opposite to support speedy passage of this legislation. I would ask for unanimous consent to debate the bill without the printing of the bill, if that is necessary.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: There was a lot of noise around; I didn't hear whether the minister said he doesn't even have this bill printed yet. Did I hear that?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I don't know what you heard, actually, member for St Catharines, but let me help. I think what the minister said is that he would like unanimous consent to debate the bill before it's printed, and that's in order.

Mr Bradley: If necessary.

The Speaker: If necessary.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I don't think it's going to be necessary.

The Speaker: It doesn't matter, necessary or not. That's the actual request for unanimous consent.

Mr Wildman: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: If necessary, certainly, but is it necessary?

The Speaker: What you're really saying is that you want unanimous consent to debate the bill before it's printed, period.

Hon Mr Flaherty: Right.

The Speaker: Is it agreed to have unanimous consent to debate the bill before it's printed? Agreed.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Certainly we're going to allow the debate, but are we going to get anything in writing so that

we know what the bill contains? Are we going to get a fax copy or anything?

The Speaker: As far as I'm concerned, I don't know what you have or what you don't have, but now you've agreed to debate the bill before it's printed.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You should know that I shared this piece of legislation with both House leaders last week and it should have been distributed to all members of the House at this time.

The Speaker: I don't know anything about that.

1400

SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): Earlier I introduced a bill that, if passed, would establish Canada's first sex offender registry. For the past three years this government has urged the federal government to establish a national sex offender registry but they have consistently refused.

This is an extremely important community safety issue for all Ontarians, but especially for women and young children.

The government of Ontario is committed to ensuring that people feel safe in their homes and in their neighbourhoods. It is my belief and this government's belief that police should have the ability to track the whereabouts of pedophiles, rapists and other sex offenders and to access information on sex offenders registered in other communities.

If passed, this legislation would require convicted sex offenders residing in Ontario to register their names and addresses with police in their communities. They would also be required to update that information on an annual basis or any time their address changes. This information would be placed in the sex offender registry and would be accessible to local police services that under the Community Safety Act have the ability to release the information to the public. The provincial government believes in disclosure of the names of sex offenders to protect the public and by regulation has given local police services the authority to do so.

The sex offender registry would build upon this authority and better enable police to keep a close eye on any known sex offender, thereby further protecting the most vulnerable people in their communities.

I'm sure all members remember Christopher Stephenson, an 11-year-old Brampton boy who was abducted from a mall and brutally murdered more than a decade ago. The convicted pedophile who was responsible for Christopher's murder was out on federal parole and local police had no formal way of knowing that this dangerous sexual predator was in their midst.

A coroner's inquest was held following Christopher's death. The inquest jury made 71 recommendations, key among them the call for the establishment of a national

sex offender registry. The federal government has rejected this recommendation, as well as repeated calls for action from Christopher's family and the Ontario government.

Ontario will wait no longer. We have acted alone and introduced the necessary legislation that would create a province-wide sex offender registry. I would also like to acknowledge the work of my colleague the member for York Mills, the Honourable David Turnbull, who has been a long-time advocate for the creation of a pedophile registry.

Through the proposed bill, it is our intent to demonstrate in a tangible way just how serious our commitment is to community safety for all Ontarians. We will not forget Christopher. Instead, we remember him with this bill, which is intended to prevent other innocent people, especially children, from becoming the victims of similar senseless acts. I am proud to say that we have developed this proposed legislation in consultation with Christopher's parents, Anna and Jim Stephenson, who with other members of the family are with us in the gallery today. I want to thank them for their participation in what I know had to be a very difficult task.

The Stephensons have shown incredible strength and courage over these past long and difficult years in their fight for justice. I am very proud to advise members of the House that this bill is called Christopher's Law, in memory of the son they loved so much.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Responses?

CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): Finally the government seems to realize the seriousness of this issue. It must be easy for this government to introduce this bill, because most of the work was done by myself or my office staff.

Three and a half years have now passed. Some of our contractors have been forced to fold. Some of our workers have no choice but to go on welfare. Our province has lost over \$200 million a year because of this government's refusal to deal with the Quebec-Ontario construction mobility issue. This, even though in June 1996 the Minister of Finance was advised and stated that he would look into it.

Your government promised all contractors and construction workers in Ontario that it would introduce legislation to help alleviate the problems which are presently facing them. This bill you are introducing today is the first step of many in order to do so. For example, nowhere in the bill do you include trucking for snow removal or logging.

There are also other areas that need to be addressed. Can the construction industry in Ontario be assured that its government has done all the research and produced the most efficient solution to this 30-year-old problem? After all, you have made other statements without ever following through. For example, the 1-800 number is not working. The TQA has yet to be enforced. The sales tax

guide 804 has been in place since 1995, but there is no one to enforce it.

Even if we say that this bill will be passed before the adjournment of this session, how long will it take before the actual system is in place? The Ontario construction industry and I have waited three and a half years, since my bill was introduced and received unanimous consent on June 20, 1996, for your government to finally react.

I believe that amendments must be brought later, but also that this bill is a step in the right direction. Let me advise you that the Liberal Party will support it and encourage this bill to pass all three readings today. Our construction industry has waited long enough.

SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

M. David Ramsay (Timiskaming) : Merci, Monsieur le Président. Mes félicitations à mon collègue Jean-Marc, le député pour la circonscription de Prescott-Russell.

I want to comment on the Solicitor General's introduction of the sex offender bill today and say to the minister that he promised this four years ago in a justice paper that his ministry had produced in June 1995. That's four years ago, Minister, that you had promised this, and now in the dying days of this government, with maybe only three legislative days remaining, we now have a major piece of legislation that is of utmost importance to the people of Ontario being introduced. I don't know what his plans are with the House leader to do that, but it's really a shame this took so long.

The opposition also is committed to ensuring that people feel safe in their homes and in their neighbourhoods. We also believe that police should have the ability to track the whereabouts of pedophiles, rapists and other sex offenders, and to access information on sex offenders registered in other communities.

We remember Christopher Stephenson, an 11-year-old boy who was abducted from a mall and brutally murdered more than a decade ago. All of us here in this Legislature want to work together to make sure that this never happens again. This bill is a start. I wish it had come sooner. We will wait and see, when we see the details of how the government is to proceed with this bill.

1410

CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I am really surprised, in responding to the Minister of Labour, that we don't have a printed bill. I remember the member for Prescott-Russell introducing a bill in this Legislature at least three years ago which was an even tougher bill than this particular bill the Minister of Labour happened to introduce. We find out on the eve of an election that they're going to introduce this bill and it's not even printed. I'm surprised.

SEX OFFENDER REGISTRY

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): In response to the Solicitor General, in the absence of our justice critic let me just briefly say that we look forward to working with you on this bill. We want to work with you to ensure that it both achieves its stated goals of community safety and that it withstands any kind of charter challenge which we know will be forthcoming on a bill like this.

Certainly there have been controversies about the establishment of registries and how you balance issues. We've seen certain concerns raised with the child abuse registry, but on the balance we believe it's the right thing to do and we need to work to mitigate those concerns and ensure that the law is good.

We join with you today to commit this law to the memory of Christopher.

CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): In response to the Minister's introduction of the Fairness is a Two-way Street Act, you guys are really something else with these names. I don't how much you spend on the talent to do that but it is a talent, I give you that. Conning people is a defined talent.

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: Hang on, you're going to be more upset when I'm done. Let me just say that the minister talks about —

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: I was starting to say to the minister that when he said that this has been a 30-year problem, it's a 30-year problem that every government has done a chunk of the work on to move it forward. Certainly our Minister of Economic Development, Frances Lankin, laid the groundwork that was there for you to pick up on and run with, but you talk about 30 years and you don't even have the bill printed. In the last four months the House hasn't been sitting. What have you been doing over there?

The minister talks to us today about wanting to do this for workers. This isn't about construction workers; this is about politics. If you cared a wit about workers you wouldn't have done what you tried to do last week to the TTC workers. That's the real face of the Mike Harris government when it comes to how you feel about workers.

I also think it's absolutely no coincidence that it's on the day of mourning, when you knew the opposition would be talking about your horrible track record around the health and safety of workers, that you chose to introduce the bill. The fact of the matter is that you haven't had any major consultation with the construction trades unions — you did go after the construction workers in Bill 31, you went after the apprenticeship workers in Bill 55 — this is all about politics and not about workers.

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): In response to the Minister of Labour's statement regarding the Quebec construction worker issue in eastern Ontario, I'm pleased to be able to support this bill both on behalf of myself and my caucus colleagues. This is an important first step to bringing the Quebec government to the bargaining table to improve access for qualified Ontario workers to Quebec construction sites.

I know too well the frustration of many qualified Ontario workers being prevented from working across the Ottawa River when no similar restriction exists on our side. We need to negotiate a better deal and this legislation begins that process. But it is important to remember that access is the key issue here, not relaxing standards that protect jobs and protect working men and working women in this industry; standards governing trade qualifications and occupational health and safety requirements.

If we are to accept the slogan put forward by the government opposite that fairness is a two-way street, then we have to recognize that protecting workers and employers through better trade qualifications in Ontario has to be part of that deal.

This is only a first step to bring us to the bargaining table. We have yet to see what the government will bargain for and bargain away, and that is what we are concerned about.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): As my colleague from Ottawa West said, this is a first step. But I want to say to the Minister of Labour, you're forgetting another part of the province that has an equal problem in another industry, and that is northeastern Ontario. We have a situation that's been going on that we've been asking your government to move on, which is the workers coming in from the province of Quebec into the forest industry and displacing Ontario workers because of the unfair practices between Quebec and Ontario.

I can tell you specifically that we have people who have huge investments, Ontario investors who own equipment in the forest industry who have their machines sitting idle because they're not able to get back into the province of Quebec to compete against Quebec contractors, but the Quebec contractors are allowed to come into Ontario and compete against us. I think that's an unfair advantage.

If you're really talking about a two-way street, I'd like you to pave the sidewalk a little bit and bring it up into northern Ontario so that we're able to see a little bit of fairness when it comes to the legislation that you put forward.

I also want to point out to you, we have the same problem in the trucking industry. I don't know how many times I've been approached by people in my riding and across northeastern Ontario around the trucking industry. The truckers are harassed as they go into the Quebec side of the border trying to move goods, whereas Quebec truckers are able to come to our side. So bring it up to northern Ontario —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I seek unanimous consent to recognize today as a day of mourning for persons killed or injured in the workplace.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

DAY OF MOURNING

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): Today I rise to recognize and observe the day of mourning for persons killed or injured in the workplace.

On February 1, 1991, Canadian legislation designating a day of mourning for workers killed and injured on the job was given royal assent. April 28 was chosen as the day of remembrance because it's the anniversary of the day in 1914 when Canada's first workers' compensation legislation was passed here in Ontario.

Quality of worker health and safety means healthier families and healthier communities.

Today we join with our colleagues in the government and in the third party to urge employers and employees alike to ensure that proper health and safety protocols are in place, and that we here in this Legislature continue to recognize our role first in recognizing the importance of health and safety legislation and compensation legislation to workers right across this great province.

1420

As all of us in this House affirm our commitment today to the prevention of workplace injury and death, we know that the statistics tell us there is work to be done. According to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board officials, on an average working day in Ontario we have one fatality in the workplace, we have three amputations, we have 70 permanent disabilities and we have 500 lost-time injuries. That is every day in the province of Ontario.

We can't rest of course until tragedies in the general sense are eliminated, tragedies such as an accident which occurred in Mississauga last year where a young 18-year-old man with this whole life ahead of him was performing construction work, where a car went through a row of orange pylons which was separating the work site and hit an 18-year-old construction worker, where a young man's legs were immediately amputated and his life was changed forever.

We know that hundreds of thousands of injury claims are registered each year and that workplace injuries and illness account for millions and millions of dollars in compensation claims. The threat of job loss — coupled with privatization, restructuring and layoffs — has contributed towards the continuation of unsafe conditions in some workplaces. No one should be reluctant to speak out against unsafe conditions at a work site for fear of losing their job.

Each member of my party and my colleagues here in the Legislature and our constituents in our communities all over Ontario join all of the members of the Legislature in recognizing this important day. I think all of us believe as members, regardless of how we believe that end ought to be achieved, that our common goal ought to be to

reduce lost-time injuries and certainly fatalities in the workplace. I am proud, on behalf of my party, to join in this recognition today.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Today we join with others across Ontario to mourn fallen workers. I was at a moving ceremony in Hamilton this morning and other members of the NDP caucus spoke at solemn commemorations in other communities across the province.

We set aside this day to honour all those who have died in workplace accidents or from occupational disease, but we honour them every day by fighting for the rights of all working women and men — not only the right to healthy and safe workplaces, but also the right to organize without fear, to earn fair wages, to have successful rights, to be free from the threat of scab labour.

On this day in 1914, the Legislature passed Ontario's first workers' compensation act and it was called and was a workers' compensation act. April 28 has since become the official day of mourning in Ontario, across Canada, the United States, Australia and Spain. People in 70 countries now observe the day of mourning. I hope one day it is recognized universally.

In 1914 most who worked in the foundries and the forests, the mines and the mills, risked life and limb to feed their families. What would those workers say to us today? They would be amazed at some of the changes and appalled that so many lives are still at risk, appalled as we are that on average in a working day in Ontario there's one death, three amputations, 70 permanent disabilities and 500 lost-time accidents.

When we talk about health and safety today, we use words that workers from 1914 might not understand, like the deadly threat of carcinogens and toxins in the workplace, the intolerable working conditions in call centres, burnout from bearing the brunt of privatizing health care and education by the back door, and sexual harassment and intimidation in the workplace.

Workers from 1914 wouldn't know some other words either, words like "globalization," "shareholder profits" or "downsizing," but I believe every worker in every time and place would in an instant understand that our fight has always been the struggle for basic human dignity and respect for all workers. It is to that struggle on this day of mourning that New Democrats continue our pledge, and we ask others to continue the pledge, continue the struggle. There is still so much that needs to be done.

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour): I rise today to pay tribute to the memory of all those workers who lost their lives or were injured on the job last year. Today is a day of mourning for those workers. As Minister of Labour, I read the fatal and critical accident reports that regrettably are on my desk too many mornings. It is the saddest and most solemn part of my job. No job — not yours, not mine and not the other four million jobs in Ontario — is worth dying for. No job is worth a permanent disability. No job is worth an occupational illness down the road. No shipping order, no production line, no

project deadline is worth the shortcut and haste that are almost always to blame for fatalities and critical injuries.

The priority is life. Therefore, let us renew our commitment to work together to end workplace fatalities and injuries. Let us leave no stone unturned, no good idea unexplored in our search for accident-free workplaces.

Progress is being made. In 1995, we set an ambitious target to reduce the number of lost-time injuries in Ontario by 30% by the year 2000. We're on track to make that target; we may well exceed it. Progress is also being made in preventing injuries through proactive inspections by the Ministry of Labour. Since 1995, inspections have increased 63%; since 1995, orders have increased 83%.

The key here is partnerships. Right now there are a number of organizations, including the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, the safe workplace associations, the Safe Communities Foundation and the Ministry of Labour, all engaged in a unified effort to prevent injuries and illness in the workplace. Tomorrow we rejoin the fight. We will prevail. But today we remember those we could not save. I ask all members to stand and honour them in one minute's silence.

The House observed one minute's silence.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): In accordance with standing order 95(d), I'm required to conduct a ballot to determine the order in which private members' public business will be considered during the third session of the 36th Parliament.

It is not necessary at this time to indicate your choice of subject matter to be debated; however, if you wish to participate you will please so indicate below and return this ballot so that I can actually do what I'm supposed to do. The draw will be conducted in room 104 on Thursday, April 29, and today is the last day to get your ballots in.

ORAL QUESTIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. This morning the Environmental Commissioner released her report for 1998. Clearly this report is the most damning, brutal report on the performance of an environment minister that has ever been tabled in this Legislature. It systematically goes through all of your failures, through government's direct action on hurting the environment and hurting the lives of Ontarians.

The report states that it "documents the decline of Ontario's capacity to protect the environment." The commissioner goes on to say, "Evidence of the deterioration of the province's environmental standards is widespread." It also goes on to say: "Ontario's emphasis on

less government — when it comes to the environment — has translated into less enforcement and less protection for the environment.”

1430

Minister, these are the facts that your \$100-million taxpayer-funded re-election ads don't tell Ontarians. These are the facts that your Drive Clean ads don't tell Ontarians. Will you now stand up and admit that your government has totally failed to protect the environment and the health of Ontarians in its last four years?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I obviously don't agree with the member opposite or what the commissioner says with regard to the performance of this government. We are very proud of our performance. We have attacked a number of problems that have been neglected by previous governments and we will continue to do so, because we are a government of action. We are a government of fixing problems with regard to air quality standards, with regard to Drive Clean, with regard to bringing forward real action to environmental problems, something previous governments haven't done.

Mr Agostino: It's obvious that the minister has not yet read the report. I would suggest you read it and be briefed on it before you comment on it, because clearly we're not talking about the same report. This report, when it talks about air quality, labels your attempts to upgrade standards as “feeble.” That is not my word; that is the word of the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

In 1966 you said you were going to aggressively work to update 70 air quality standards. To date, not one of those standards has been updated. You fail to understand what we're talking about here. Understand this: Every five hours of every day of every month of every year, one Ontarian dies prematurely in this province as a result of poor air quality. We are talking about 1,800 deaths a year. Minister, you've done absolutely nothing in the past four years to try to improve this. You have failed on air quality standards.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question.

Mr Agostino: Drive Clean was much delayed. You have failed all of us.

Minister, will you start to take the interests of Ontarians first and will you protect the environment —

The Speaker: Thank you. Minister.

Hon Mr Sterling: This government has taken more actions than any previous government over the last 10 years prior to our coming into power in 1995. In terms of the air quality standards, by the end of this fiscal year, 1999-2000, we will have dealt with 70% of the air quality standards that affect our air.

The reason that it's taking us so long to deal with it is because the task is so great, because so little was done over the previous 20 years, as the Provincial Auditor pointed out. It does take some time to strike standards intelligently, to strike the stiffest standards in North America, and that's exactly what we're doing.

Mr Agostino: Again, the answer would be more helpful if the minister had read the report. Clearly, Minister, you have the worst track record of any environment minister in the history of this province. Your government's track record is second to none; you have the worst governmental record of any government in the history of this province. You have failed in every aspect: air quality, hazardous waste, protecting the health of Ontarians. Very clearly, you have shown no commitment to the environment.

It is clear through this report and others that Mike Harris is a polluter's best friend in this province and that environmental policy is being set in the boardrooms, not the cabinet room, of this province. You have sold out to your corporate friends, you have failed to act, you have failed to set standards, you have let Ontarians down.

Again, 1,800 Ontarians prematurely every single year as a result of air quality, and you have the nerve to sit there and brag about your record and what you have done. You have done a great deal to dismantle environmental regulations and to kill Ontarians.

Will you do the honourable thing today and resign? That will give you more time to read this damned report.

Hon Mr Sterling: With regard to this particular member, the rhetoric doesn't change. Every time we move out in a positive way to address a problem, the member for Hamilton East stands up and says: “It's not enough. It's too late. Resign.” That's the answer and the constructive criticism that I receive from the member for Hamilton East.

This government has addressed —
Interjections.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon Mr Sterling: There are people who die prematurely because of air quality in this province, but that was happening under the previous regimes as well. The same number were suffering as are suffering today. The difference between their governments and our government is that we're trying to lower that number and they did nothing.

YOUNG OFFENDERS

Mr David Ramsay (Timiskaming): I have a question for the Solicitor General. On June 11, 1996, I asked you in this House when you were informed of the allegations of assaults at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre on February 29. You replied that you were unaware of any allegations to June 6 of that year.

We now know that your executive assistant was informed of the allegations on March 4 by the deputy minister. He has also stated in court transcripts that he continued to keep in close contact with your executive assistant.

I can't comprehend how your most senior assistant didn't tell you for three months. Do you really expect us to believe that not once in those three months did your senior political assistant tell you about these allegations?

We also know that the former Minister of Community and Social Services knew about this, as well as his deputy minister, but again didn't speak to you about this over the three-month period.

Minister, I find this all very hard to believe. When are you going to come clean as to when you first heard of these allegations?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): Those reported comments with respect to my former executive assistant are completely inaccurate.

Mr Ramsay: Let's go over this again. Your assistant deputy minister knew, your deputy minister knew and we think your executive assistant also knew. The former Comsoc minister knew and his deputy minister also knew, but you did not. Minister, I've heard of spin, but this is a stretch at the very best.

I also have some grave concerns regarding the firing of the six men over this issue, most of whom are here today. It seems that there were insufficient grounds and the only reason that they were fired was to defuse a potential political crisis. It is also clear from court transcripts that we have received that you were the one who ultimately gave the final approval for those dismissals.

We want to know why during a senior management meeting where there was consensus that there wasn't enough evidence to suspend the managers, you decided to do it anyway, and why just before the story re-emerged two weeks ago, your government offered to reinstate with back pay the remaining two managers fired.

Hon Mr Runciman: Personnel matters are handled by the senior public service and not by political officials. In this case that course was followed and there was no interference from a political level in those decisions.

Mr Ramsay: Your fingerprints are all over this and so are senior management's and other high officials' in this government.

In May, the London police advised the superintendent, George Simpson, that there wasn't sufficient evidence in the child advocate's report to justify a police investigation. It seems, though, that they changed their minds after a phone call from the ministry with an offer to pay for an investigation. As a result, 31 charges were laid; 29 were dropped. The other two pleaded guilty because they couldn't continue to afford their lawyers' fees. Were the police sent in to divert attention away from you and a political crisis, or is it just the Harris government's policy to pay for police investigations?

Minister, we need answers. We need a public inquiry. When are you going to call a public inquiry into this?

Hon Mr Runciman: I've indicated clearly that there was no political interference with respect to this. There was a police investigation and charges were laid. There are still some matters pending before the Grievance Settlement Board, so I think to go beyond that would be inappropriate. But I can indicate clearly that there was no undue interference or pressure from the minister's office with respect to this whole matter.

1440

TRANSIT SERVICES

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Transportation. Today I put it to you that the \$1.6 billion that your government got from the sale of Highway 407 should be put into a transit fund for the greater Toronto area and for Hamilton-Wentworth.

Your government downloaded responsibility for public transit on to municipalities and you cut the funding. You have created a crisis in public transit in the greater Toronto area, in the Hamilton-Wentworth area and across this province. The Hemson transportation study shows how big that crisis is going to get.

Minister, you've got a chance to do something about it. You've got \$1.6 billion in revenue from the sale of 407. Do the right thing: Put it into a public transit fund for the greater Toronto area and Hamilton-Wentworth so that people can be sure they're going to get the transit service they need.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation): I disagree with some of the honourable member's conclusions. That's what democratic debate is all about. I find it a bit peculiar that the same party that opposed privatization is now willing to spend the money which is the fruit of privatization. Perhaps the public can judge how sincere that is.

I should also say to the honourable member that there has been an exchange of services through our local services restructuring, which has been supported by the municipalities, I might say. They have supported the exchange so that they could have more control over hard services, and we uploaded to the provincial level \$2.5 billion worth of charges that were formerly on the education portion of the property tax. This is all part of the restructuring, so that the municipalities have \$2.5 billion worth of tax room to deal with services such as public transit.

We are looking after the municipalities and their needs based on their wishes just fine, thank you very much.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary.

Mr Hampton: Minister, you can try that fairy tale here. Don't go out there and try it, because nobody believes it. The Environmental Commissioner today issued her report. It says your government has abandoned public transit, you're causing a huge public health problem, a huge pollution problem, not to mention the fact that you're leaving municipalities that need public transit in a huge financial hole. That's what you've done. Nobody buys your rhetoric about revenue-neutral, that somehow this is all going to work out. It's not working out. The Hemson transportation study proves it's not working out.

Minister, what are you going to do? Are you going to go out there and pay for the construction of more Spadina expressways? Is that your solution to urban transit? Is that your solution to the kinds of transportation we need

in large urban areas, or are you going to put in place now a transit fund that will allow for the kind of transportation funding that large municipalities are going to need? What's it going to be, more Spadina —

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister of Transportation.

Hon Mr Clement: I disagree that any government policy has reduced the amount of available expenditures for public transit. I talked already about the tax room that is available to the tune of \$2.5 billion. Let's go over the facts. It's not only that tax room, it's \$829 million for the TTC capital funding last year; it's \$106 million for GO Transit and their capital funding; it's an extra \$70 million for other municipal transit services. That speaks louder than the words and the rhetoric of the honourable member. It took strong leadership to make those decisions, and the strong leadership is on this side of the House.

Mr Hampton: We're talking about a service that is needed by at least a couple of million people. In the broadest context, we're talking about four million people. This minister thinks that if he buys a couple of subway cars, he has dealt with the issues of urban transportation.

You know yourself that you have downloaded just on to the city of Toronto \$163 million in costs for urban transit and there is no money to cover that. How can you even claim to be the Minister of Transportation? You are abandoning one of the most essential services in terms of transporting people in a large urban environment. If you don't have a plan for the financing of public transit, I'll give you ours. It provides \$96 million a year. What's it going to be? You don't have a plan of your own. Will you at least adopt our plan?

Interjection.

The Speaker: Member for Etobicoke-Humber, come to order, please. Thank you, Minister of Transportation?

Hon Mr Clement: I hope the honourable member was not suggesting that \$829 million to the TTC in some manner just buys a couple of subway cars. That helps finance the majority of the Sheppard subway system for the people of Toronto and indeed for the people of the greater Toronto area. If you are speaking lightly of a commitment on behalf of the taxpayers of Ontario of \$829 million, if you are ridiculing that, I put it to you that you're ridiculing all of the taxpayers of Ontario and their hard-earned money that is going to that service.

The honourable member says, "Adopt our plan." The last time the people of Ontario adopted their plan, we tripled the deficit and doubled the debt. I don't think the people of Ontario want their plans any more.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My next question is for the Minister of Environment. I want to ask about the report of the Environmental Commissioner today. This is the fourth report in a row where the Environmental Commissioner has trashed your government's record on the environment. She goes through literally dozens of examples where you have basically abandoned the environment.

I know what you've done over the last four years: You've cut environmental protection, you've cut the Ministry of Environment, you've cut the Ministry of Natural Resources, in order to finance your 30% so-called income tax cut. I don't approve of that.

What I want to get at is what the Environmental Commissioner gets at. Because of the lack of environmental protection, we now have some of the most polluted air in the province. Some 1,800 people died from that polluted air last summer. Children are suffering epidemics of asthma, in part as a result of that polluted air.

Minister, when you made these decisions to cut environmental protection, did you consider any of those things? Do any of those things matter in your race to give the most well off a tax cut?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I think the member opposite perhaps has got it backwards. In terms of air quality, what our records actually show is that the air quality in the province has been improving over the last four years. The last time there was a bad air quality year was in 1994. Previous to that it was 1988. Part of that relates to weather, part of it relates to what actions are taken by the government. We have taken more actions with regard to air quality than any previous government.

In 1992 the Provincial Auditor told the NDP government that they should revamp air quality standards. When we arrived at the Ministry of the Environment, nothing was going on with regard to revamping our air quality standards.

We're doing that. We're improving the air quality and driving down the number of people who suffer from bad air quality in this province, and we will continue to do so.

Mr Hampton: I guess according to the Minister of the Environment this report, covering 288 pages, is all fiction. I guess this fourth report issued by the Environmental Commissioner which condemns your government is all fiction.

Minister, when are you going to take responsibility? The fact of the matter is that your government has abandoned environmental protection in area after area. You have cut. You have decimated. You have done away with the enforcement officers, you have done away with the inspectors, you've done away with the technicians, you've done away with the scientists, all in your mad rush to give the most well off people in this province a tax cut at the expense of the environment.

What I'm asking is, when you make these decisions, do you consider what the results are going to be for people who have to breathe the air, people who have to deal with more toxins and carcinogens in the environment? Do you think about the number of children who now suffer from respiratory diseases? Does any of that matter in your calculation, Minister, or is it all about tax cuts?

Hon Mr Sterling: That is my only consideration.

1450

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Final supplementary, member for Riverdale.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Minister, I heard you earlier say that you are proud of your record. If you really mean that, every member in this House should be ashamed to be associated with you and you should be ashamed of yourself. There has been report after report after report for the last four years from independent bodies telling you to clean up your act, and you have ignored them.

Let me tell you what I find the most frightening about your response to this, your lack of action: It's that we're not going to see the results of some of your slashing and burning until in the future, when you and Mike Harris are long gone, when more children have asthma, when more people are dying, when we have more Plastimet situations like we have in Hamilton. That is what the Environmental Commissioner said to us loudly and clearly today.

Minister, apologize to this House and to the members of our communities for what you said today and tell us today that you are, while you still have the chance, going to fix this problem.

Hon Mr Sterling: I'm sorry the member opposite turns this into a personal attack rather than dealing with the issues.

This government has done more with regard to dealing with environmental issues than any previous government has. Just take a look: "Ontario Green Plan Wins B Plus," the highest award given to any province or federal government in this country.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock. Minister?

Hon Mr Sterling: In 1988, the Liberal government then said they were going to implement a vehicle emissions testing program and they were going to have it done by 1992. The NDP government talked about it, had a pilot project, but did nothing. Which government took action? Our government took action because we are not afraid to attack problems to actually improve the air quality and the environment of the people of Ontario, and we will continue to do so.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): My question is to the Minister of Health. This week, we have heard many horror stories that have occurred in hospitals following the cuts your government has made to our health care system. Today, I have the unfortunate obligation to bring another tragedy to your attention.

Mr Desjardins of Hawkesbury was scheduled for bypass surgery on March 11. This great man had an indescribable love for life. He had a loving wife and family, all of whom were anxious for his operation. For them, this surgery was a sign of hope and an assurance that he would regain the life he once had. However, the day of his scheduled surgery Mr Desjardins was advised that no bed was available, but if one were found he would be contacted. Mr Desjardins waited all day by the phone. At 5 o'clock he received a call, "Still no beds available."

Worse still, he was later told that he must wait until the end of April to have his surgery. Unfortunately, four days later Mr Desjardins died of a heart attack.

Minister, having been elected to protect the rights of all Ontarians, do you have the nerve today to stand and tell the people of our province that the Harris government cut to health care was the right thing to do?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I think it's important to indicate one more time that our government has not cut health care. As you know, we have increased the level of spending from \$17.4 billion to \$18.9 billion, and our government is also making the very difficult decisions which previous governments neglected to make. If you want to take a look at the whole issue of cardiac procedures, we are today performing 23,000 more cardiac procedures than were done in 1995. This is a 50% increase. We will continue to do so. We will continue to make the services available and increase the capacity in the system.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary, the member for Kingston and The Islands.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Minister, why don't you just admit that your health care policies over the last four to five years have been a complete and utter failure? That's what the people of Ontario think. All of us have heard horror stories in our constituency offices of surgeries being cancelled, emergency wards being closed. Each cancellation, you well know, adds more stress and anxiety to the patients and their families, actually their physical pain, and also causes them to basically put their lives on hold. One of my constituents had surgery for an aneurysm cancelled three times due to a lack of bed space.

Over the last four to five years, the waiting list for neurosurgery has increased for each neurosurgeon in Kingston from a dozen to 60 or 70 people, from a six- to eight-week waiting period to waiting periods of well over a year. Today 90% of all neurosurgery is of an emergency nature. Why don't you just admit your total failure in your health care policies?

Hon Mrs Witmer: We have a plan. Unfortunately, previous governments did not plan for the needs of our population. I would just like to take you back to when your government was in power. From the Kingston Whig-Standard, January 24, 1989: A 63-year-old man died in St Michael's Hospital after cardiac bypass surgery. It happens. His operation had been postponed 11 times. These are the stories, and there are pages and pages of this happening under your government.

That is why we are expanding the capacity of the system. We want to make sure there's the capacity there not only today; in fact, we have, as you know, planned for the construction of three additional comprehensive cardiac units in this province. We are providing additional capacity in Kingston, in Peterborough. We are planning for the future. As I say —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): New question, third party.

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES LEGISLATION

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): To the Minister of Citizenship: Last Thursday, after the throne speech, you made quite an amazing statement to a room full of people from the disability community. You stated that your government had never promised to pass an Ontarians with Disabilities Act, that you had only promised to introduce it. You repeated that statement to a group of reporters and CBC Radio news reported on your quote the next day.

It was a breathtaking attempt at rewriting history, and I have to say I think a cynical attempt at covering up a broken promise. Will you tell us today, is that still your version of history or will you revise it again and admit that your government promised to both introduce and pass an Ontarians with Disabilities Act within your first term of office?

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): I would say that we have not broken any promise. We did introduce an Ontarians with Disabilities Act of which I was proud in that it is the first act of that nature to be introduced in Canada, to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities. It is far more than you did in five years in office. Over the period of time, before the Legislature came back, since it died on the order paper before Christmas, we listened to the people who phoned in. We read our mail and we decided that we will now consult, and we proceed to move forward with this issue.

I can't promise you anything because we are in the House hearings. We may be here in three weeks and we may be moving forward. I am consulting with people.

1500

Ms Lankin: Let me contrast what you claimed last week with what your Premier said in writing in his May 24, 1995, letter to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, where he promised "to enact an Ontarians with Disabilities Act in the first term of office."

Let me go on to remind you that on May 16, 1996, one year later, the Ontario Legislature passed a resolution with unanimous Tory caucus support — and I'm going to quote from that too — "to keep its promise as set out in the letter from Michael D. Harris to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee dated May 24, 1995, to enact an Ontarians with Disabilities Act in its current term of office."

Minister, what do you think the word "enact" means? Where is the commitment? What do you mean you can't make a promise? Mike Harris, the guy who's out there, who said he's kept every promise, has obviously broken a promise to persons with disabilities. A promise reneged on is a promise broken.

Minister, let me put this question to you. You have two options. You can either admit that you've broken a promise or you can recommit to pass this legislation within your first term. Which will it be?

Hon Ms Bassett: The Premier has certainly not broken any promise. He did what he said he would do. This government has brought in an ODA and it died on the order paper, as we all know. We were all upset that that happened. I felt that this bill would prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

We are —

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Member for Ottawa West, please come to order. Thank you.

Hon Ms Bassett: We are moving forward. We have paused to listen to what Ontarians have told us. They wanted us to re-examine what we are doing and then to bring it forward. We are in the process of doing that. We are sitting here, and you know the legislative process as well as anyone in this room. You know that there is an order in which things come forward.

ENERGY COMPETITION

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph): My question today is for the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology. In October 1998 the Energy Competition Act led to many changes in the current electricity market. It's a very complicated field and certainly the way we buy energy, the way we buy electricity, how our bills are going to look, is going to be dramatically changed. Constituents have expressed concern that this is a highly complicated industry and very confusing.

I would like to ask the minister what he has been able to do through this act to keep Ontarians aware of impending changes in how we come to know electricity.

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Thank you very much to the member for Guelph for her help earlier on. As the Minister of Environment and Energy three years ago, she began the process of developing the Energy Competition Act, and that was taken up by our colleague Norm Sterling. I inherited it some 17 months ago and I'm proud that before Christmas the act was passed.

Since that time my ministry, along with outside advisers on the minister's energy transition committee — people like Hazel McCallion, the mayor of Mississauga, are on that committee — has been working very actively to get the word out to the public that the marketplace will be open to competition for electricity in the year 2000.

This little pamphlet here was produced by the committee of stakeholders. Some five million are being sent to households with people's electricity and gas bills. We've had tremendous co-operation from the Municipal Electric Association and the gas distribution companies in getting that out.

Also, my ministry produces Power Switch, which goes out to all municipal leaders, PUCs and municipal electrical utilities. We've also held some 18 workshops across the province — over 1,000 municipal leaders attended those workshops — to explain the changes that

are coming. There will be many more communications with the public to ensure they're well prepared for —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

Mrs Elliott: With change come opportunities, and not necessarily always good opportunities. In my riding we've heard stories from constituents about unscrupulous gas marketers, about people who were signed into contracts they didn't necessarily understand and wanted to follow through. Lately we've been hearing about lack of service and more than unhelpful call centres. I'm wondering if there are further actions you are able to take to protect consumers against these kinds of difficulties and other unfair practices.

Hon Mr Wilson: Because of the confusion, as we've had a competitive market for some years now in the gas side of the energy business and in the telephone side of the business of telecommunications, we've had some confusion out there with marketers calling people up. You don't know whether these people are legitimate or otherwise when they call you at dinnertime or come to your home. So for the first time, under the Energy Competition Act, we'll be licensing all marketers, agents and retailers of electricity. They will be required to have ID. They will be required to meet a code of conduct.

For the first time the Ontario Energy Board will regulate this area, so any complaints in the future will go to the impartial, arm's-length Ontario Energy Board. They can pull a marketer's licence, something that can't be done today when a marketer comes to your door, but it is part of the new act and will in place very soon.

Also, for anyone who has signed an energy contract from now until the electricity market is open in the year 2000, that contract will have to reaffirmed. It becomes null and void and people will have to re-sign. So if anyone has signed anything now, they'll have an opportunity to look at that again in the year 2000, next year, when competition comes in.

Also, there will be a 10-day cooling-off period with all new contracts —

The Speaker: New question.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My question is to the Chair of Management Board. There is a growing revolt across Ontario against the orgy of blatantly partisan propaganda ads that are blanketing television screens, the airwaves, newspapers and mailboxes, all at taxpayers' expense and all designed to re-elect the Mike Harris Conservatives.

University of Toronto political scientist Nelson Wiseman said of your taxpayer-paid ads:

"It's a flagrant and wasteful expenditure of public monies. It's all the more insulting to the intelligence of the public because this is a government that said it's going to cut back on wasteful spending."

At a time when you're closing community hospitals, at a time when morale among our educators and health care workers has sunk to an all-time low as a result of your

axe-wielding policies, at a time when you are closing community schools, how can Mike Harris, the self-appointed cost-cutter, justify squandering millions on yet more self-serving, clearly partisan television commercials whose only purpose is to get his government re-elected using taxpayers' dollars?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I think the member of the opposition would recognize that all governments have an obligation to the public to advertise and to explain their policies and their programs. I would agree with him that we have cut costs. When the Liberals were in power they spent \$277 million in a four-year period. Our government has spent \$163 million. There has been over a \$100-million reduction. The facts speak for themselves.

Mr Bradley: I have an even more telling quote from a genuine expert on blatantly partisan ads paid for by the taxpayers. This expert on using taxpayers' money for government advertising of a partisan nature said the following, and I want you to listen carefully to it:

"Prime-time ads promoting the government's Jobs Ontario program are being used by the NDP to woo voters. It's nothing more than a propaganda blitz for the NDP. It's electioneering and campaigning on taxpayers' money and it's wrong."

Guess who said that.

Interjection: Who said it?

Mr Bradley: The author of that quote is none other than Mike Harris — Mike Harris himself.

Will you bring to an immediate end this abuse of public office described by Mike Harris as "electioneering and campaigning on taxpayers' money and it's wrong," and will you assure this House that this advertising will not continue during the period of time of an election campaign in this province?

1510

Hon Mr Hodgson: As I mentioned before, governments have an obligation to explain to the public what's going on. There's been a lot of change. There are a lot of things we have to talk about — massive changes in terms of restructuring Ontario to make sure we have the framework to create those 540,000 net new jobs and to revitalize Ontario back to its rightful place of leading Canada.

If he wants to talk about quotes in past governments, as I mentioned we're spending over \$100 million less than his government spent when he was in power. I can quote, because from time to time there are criticisms of government advertising. When his government was in power, the Chair of Management Board at the time was Murray Elston. He answered the complaint by saying: "From time to time there is a need to make information available to the public in the broadest possible way. We do the best we can in managing our budgets."

There was another minister in 1985 — this was only about three or four months after your government was in power. Vince Kerrio, the Minister of Natural Resources, on December 10, 1985, answered the complaint this way:

"We're going to have to send the message out that Ontario is in good shape and is going to be in better shape than it had ever been in the past 42 years. The member can put that in his little pipe and smoke it."

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Minister, you're out of order. Sit down, please. Member for Ottawa West, you have to come to order. No more heckling. I'm warning you: If you heckle again I'm going to throw you out.

PATIENTS' BILL OF RIGHTS

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): My question is for the Minister of Health. On June 25, 1998, I introduced a Patients' Bill of Rights in the Legislature. This bill calls for provincial standards and accountability for high-quality health care so that patients know what they should expect from health care institutions and providers.

At the time, you said: "We support the Patients' Bill of Rights. We know that this is very much needed. It's what people in this province are asking for. It introduces accountability into the system. Work is underway on a patient safety bill." That was what you said 10 months ago, Minister. Have you any intention of introducing such a bill, or is this just another empty promise that you and your government won't keep?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the member has rightly indicated, our party is very supportive of a bill which would deal with the issue of patient safety, quality services for patients. In fact, I did reaffirm, when I responded to the recommendations of the Nursing Task Force — as you know, we have recently done a complete review, addressed all the concerns of the nursing profession. We are moving forward to ensure that we have the appropriate level of nursing. We're going to have 12,000 nurses by the end of the year 2000. At the same time, I indicated again that we are moving forward with patient safety.

Mrs Boyd: Promises, promises, Minister. No one is believing you when you say you'll keep those promises.

On Monday in this House, my leader brought to your attention two terrible health care stories. We hear them all the time. Kim Ginter's life is still hanging in the balance as he waits for a bed at Toronto General, the only hospital that can treat his life-threatening condition. Karen Ford still waits for the surgery and treatment she needs for her malignancy. She is still waiting for her infection to clear up, an infection she developed because she was sent home quicker and sicker from the hospital.

Minister, it occurs to me that you're not acting on this promise, you're not bringing in a bill of rights, because your government would flunk the test, every test, whether it's standards or access or accountability in health care. Is that the reason we're still waiting?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Again, let me assure you that our government does remain committed to ensure that all Ontarians receive timely access. As you know, we have been moving forward with a plan. We are not moving

forward in the way that you did. If I look at 1993, it says, "The provincial government scrambles to put together a cancer treatment strategy," and the waiting lists get longer and longer.

The reality is that we are putting in place a plan. We are, as you know, building additional capacity. We're going to have three new cancer centres. We're also ensuring that the human resources are available because, as you know, under your government there was a shortage of human resources. We now have a plan that will ensure that we have the radiation therapists, we have the oncologists, we have the physicists. In fact, we have invested \$155 million into cancer treatment for people in this province in order that the waiting time can be reduced and people can have the services as quickly as possible.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North): My question is for the Minister of Long-Term Care. Last Friday you made an announcement that was greeted with a great deal of enthusiasm in the Hamilton area. The announcement revolved around St Peter's Hospital, which has been a cornerstone in our community for over 100 years and which will shortly begin a new role as a long-term-care centre. Could you share with us how this new initiative will improve the lives of Hamilton's seniors?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors): I'd like to thank the honourable member for his question and for his vigilance in seeking out the additional long-term-care beds that have been required in the Hamilton-Wentworth region for the last 20 years.

We're proud to be a government which has responded with 902 new long-term-care beds which are being built in the city of Hamilton. The residents of St Peter's Hospital, the last of the chronic care hospitals in this province to reclassify its beds, will now receive in a fully integrated care setting various levels of care, whether it is complex continuing care, because they have made an arrangement with Chedoke Hospital, or long-term care and some additional supports that are going to be provided on that site. Because our government was the first government to bring in levels-of-care funding, those residents will actually get the funding that is required to meet their needs, and that's an important first in our province.

Interjection.

Mr Skarica: I know that Hamilton area residents have been waiting a long time for these long-term-care beds. I would, however, like you to provide some assurance that the needs of the current patients at St Peter's and the other three chronic care hospitals will be provided for. The NDP member for Hamilton Centre, who just spoke out, has been critical, as he usually is, of this transition and others. What assurances can you give us?

Hon Mr Jackson: In 1985 there were 15 chronic care hospitals in this province. I think it was Elinor Caplan in

1987 or 1988 who closed the first chronic care hospital in the member for Cornwall's riding. I know the member for Hamilton Centre, who was a member of the cabinet of the previous government, sat at a table and watched his government close several chronic care hospitals.

What this government has done in the announcement on Friday is ensure that the residents will find accommodation on the current site. They will not be asked to leave, as previous governments have done with long-term-care patients who have been resident in chronic care hospitals.

The news has been welcomed by the Hamilton community. The agreement that has been reached between St Peter's Hospital and this government is one that will allow for increased funding for patient needs, will allow for partnership to meet the specific needs of Alzheimer's patients —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): New question, member for Fort William.

EDUCATION ISSUES

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): My question is to the Minister of Education. Your government, to serve its political purposes, has waged a constant attack on teachers over the course of the last four years. You have demeaned them as individuals, you have devalued their work, you have totally demoralized them, and you have been successful in driving them out of the profession in record numbers.

More than 10,000 teachers are retiring. Twice as many as you had expected have opted for early retirement. As a result, we're facing a teacher shortage this September, even though you have done your best to have fewer teachers in our classrooms when the students come back in the fall.

I'm asking you today what steps you are taking now to make sure there are qualified teachers in every classroom next September.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I'm happy to indicate that some time ago I set up a task force on teacher recruitment. This task force is composed of representatives from the Ontario College of Teachers, from the Council of Ontario Directors of Education, deans of faculties of education, teachers' federations, principals' associations, among others. This particular task force has been doing a good deal of work. I expect their report in the very near future. I look forward to it.

I can also say, and I'm pleased to say, that the preliminary data show that the number of applicants to teacher education faculties is up over 40% —

Hon Jim Wilson (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): In spite of the scaremongering.

Hon David Johnson: — in spite of the scaremongering of certain opposition parties, particularly in math, science and technology, which is a great comfort to me: over a 70% increase in applicants in technology

pursuits. I encourage young people to consider teaching as a career. It's a wonderful, challenging career.

1520

Mrs McLeod: It is a matter of public knowledge that record numbers of teachers are leaving the profession in this year and that it has created a crisis of proportions we've never seen before. Obviously, having increased numbers of applicants for teachers' college programs in September won't put qualified teachers in the classroom in the fall. We are at the end of April. We are going probably into an election. We need to know what will be in place to ensure there are qualified teachers. The concern, Minister, is that your government has tried to put unqualified teachers into the classroom in the past. The College of Teachers had to come to you on Bill 160 and make you back off on the intention to have unqualified teachers head up the classrooms.

I know that your deputy minister has approached the College of Teachers and asked them to consider putting in place a six-week training program. Minister, I am asking for your absolute assurance that you will not be putting in place a six-week training program and putting these less qualified teachers in front of our classrooms in September.

Hon David Johnson: You have my absolute assurance that we'll be working very closely with the task force that has appointed the College of Teachers to ensure that we have quality teachers in our classrooms this fall.

The member opposite has mentioned Bill 160. Bill 160, which has been upheld in the courts just recently, provides fair funding, directing more dollars into the classroom, putting caps on average class sizes. What is the answer from the Liberal Party in terms of their approach to funding teachers and classrooms in Ontario? Their approach, according to the Toronto Star, is to put \$1.3 billion on to property taxpayers. In the Toronto Star today — download, that's your plan. Download on to property taxpayers by \$1.3 billion. Say it isn't so.

SERVICES DE SANTÉ DU NORD

NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud): Ma question est au ministre de la Santé. Pour payer pour votre réduction d'impôts, l'hiver passé vous avez pris la décision de couper le financement pour le programme des cliniques pour spécialistes médicaux en visite au nord de la province. Après l'intervention de M. Len Wood, moi-même, les communautés et leurs hôpitaux, vous avez choisi il y a une couple de semaines de réintroduire le financement de ce programme pour six mois. Je vous demande, que comptez-vous faire après six mois ?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the member has indicated, we have made the funding available. We will continue to review the situation and, based on the feedback that we get from the people in the

northern community, we will make a decision at the end of the six months.

M. Bisson : On sait que c'est beaucoup plus cher pour envoyer les patients d'un bord de la province à l'autre pour être capable d'avoir les traitements d'un spécialiste qu'envoyer le spécialiste directement dans la région. Je veux demander : on sait que vous faites ça pour être capable de payer pour votre réduction d'impôts. Ma question est bien simple : est-ce que ça fait plus de bon sens de donner une réduction d'impôts aux personnes au-dessus de 90,000 \$ par année, ou est-il mieux de payer pour avoir ce programme-là en place pour le monde du nord de la province quand ils ont des problèmes et qu'ils ont besoin de spécialistes ?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Our priority has always been to ensure that people in this province, no matter where they live, have access to needed services, and that's part of the reason why we have been expanding the number of dialysis centres. At the present time, since we were elected in 1995, we have an additional 25 dialysis centres throughout this province. We have more MRIs.

We are endeavouring to bring all the services as close to home and to the communities of the individuals, where the individuals live. In this instance as well we will continue to ensure that people have access to the primary care and the specialist services they need, and that the appropriate level of funding can be provided to ensure that access to specialists is there when they need the services of specialists.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): My question is to the minister responsible for women's issues. I understand that the women's economic independence round tables have been completed. Could you tell this assembly a bit about the findings, please.

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): Thank you to my colleague from Peterborough, who not only has been tremendously supportive of our partners for change programs across this province but has been very active in his own community.

We have completed round tables recently with women who have come to our partners at round tables, who have been invited by their own individual program leaders in their communities, in London, Ottawa, Barrie, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Toronto, Peterborough and Timmins. I think most everyone considers this a great success.

It's a place where we come together as leaders who are trying to improve the quality of life of others in our community and especially focused on helping young girls choose careers and make the right choices so that they can become economically independent. It has been a success.

I should say to my colleague that we will continue on with this way of getting good information for our government that we can pass on to other ministers and to do

everything we can to motivate these young women to make good choices for their lives.

Mr Stewart: As you know, I had the privilege of being at the round table in Peterborough, and the input and feedback that we have received since have been just wonderful.

I understand that last night the partners for change met in Toronto. Would you please share with the House the purpose of that evening and that meeting.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: Last night the large group of women that was able to come together — we do this once or twice a year to share in some of the success stories of many of our partners who take on individual projects, whether it be to assist in the prevention of violence against women or whether it be to assist in their own communities in any way they can in our partners for change projects to help women become economically independent.

One of the projects is called Words on Work. It's a women speakers' bureau. Many of the groups came together to put this brochure together so that this can be distributed to our schools. There will be about 100 role models who will be working in the schools with the teachers and the young women next September, and we hope a year from now we will have 5,000 role models who will be in schools across Ontario to help young women choose the right careers and make good decisions for success.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): I have a question for the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. I want to ask you about the Harris and Leach legacy in terms of removing any tenant protection in this province. You know that the record is in, the results are in, and rents are up in Toronto by 10%.

Minister, you ran and a lot of your colleagues ran on phony promises, on phony brochures to say you would bring the rent down and you would protect tenants. Instead you've abandoned tenants and you've encouraged bad landlords to use those rules.

Minister, will you stand up and admit today that your rules were bogus and that you've actually harmed tenants by allowing rents to increase in Toronto by an average of 10%?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): I would suggest to the honourable member across that he stick to chasing ambulances. That's something he knows more about than the rent control system.

It's incredible that the Liberal Party could talk about increases. Here are increases under the rent control of the Liberal government. Rents increased as much as 115%. In the member's riding, here are a few examples: tenants living at 29 Jane Street saw increases of 21%; tenants living in Howard Park saw increases of 11.3%; and people living at 100 Quebec Avenue saw increases of 48.9%. This is under the Liberal rent control.

For them to stand up and say that rent controls are not working under our government is laughable.

1530

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): I have a petition here that deals with the gas price situation in Ontario.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. If you're going, can you leave now?

Member for Kingston and The Islands.

Mr Gerretsen: I never knew that the presentation of petitions caused this much of a ruckus in this House. It deals with gas prices which have gone up dramatically in the province.

It states:

"Whereas since Mike Harris took office consumers across Ontario have been gouged by large oil companies who have implemented unfair and dramatic increases in the price of gasoline; and

"Whereas this increase in the price of gasoline has outpaced the rate of inflation by a rate that is totally unacceptable to all consumers in this province because it is unfair and directly affects their ability to purchase other consumer goods; and

"Whereas Premier Mike Harris and ministers within the cabinet of this government while in opposition expressed grave concern for gas price gouging and asked the government of the day to take action; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government could take action under Ontario law and pass predatory gas pricing legislation which would protect consumers, but instead seems intent on looking after the interests of big oil companies;

"We, the undersigned, petition Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to eliminate gas price fixing and prevent the oil companies from gouging the public on an essential and vital product."

I have signed the petition as well, as I am in complete agreement with it.

CANCER TREATMENT

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): I have a petition that is signed by over 4,000 residents from Windsor and Essex county, from Windsor, Belle River, Amherstburg, Leamington, Comber and many other towns in the county. It says:

"We, the undersigned residents of Canada, draw attention of the House to the following:

"That approximately eight new cases of childhood cancers are identified each year in the Windsor-Essex region;

"That the impact of having a child diagnosed with cancer is physically, emotionally and often financially devastating to the families of these young people;

"That the Windsor-Essex region lacks the ability to treat children diagnosed with cancer, therefore forcing families to travel to London for all treatments related to their diagnosis;

"That the Ontario Ministry of Health for the last two years has denied the necessary funding to treat childhood cancers in the Windsor-Essex region.

"Therefore, your petitioners call upon the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to provide the necessary funding through the Ministry of Health to establish and staff a satellite medical treatment centre in Windsor to treat local children diagnosed with cancer."

I add my signature to that petition along with CAW environmental committee members Ken Bondy and 4,000 others because I agree completely with it.

NOISE POLLUTION

Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East): It's a pleasure to rise today to present a petition signed by over 1,000 residents of Mississauga East. It reads as follows:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas residents of Mississauga East living east of Dixie Road, north of Burnhamthorpe Road, in the Rockwood and Fleetwood communities of Mississauga face daily noise by low-flying airplanes using the north-south runways of Pearson International Airport; and

"Whereas the Rockwood community includes Bough Beeches, Fieldgate Drive, Ponytrail Drive, Audubon Boulevard, Claypine Rise, Beechnoll, Palisades Lane, Chalkdene Grove, Garnetwood Chase, Garrowhill Trail, Tapestry Trail, River Mill Way, Saltdene Terrace, Branchwood Park, Shale Oak, Hartfield Grove, Copesholm Trail, Marblethorne Court, Bryce Road, Dewberry Crescent, Ottewell Crescent, Anworld Court, Corkstone Glade, Rowntree Court, Capilano Court, Poltava Crescent, Owlsnest Lane, Bacchus Crescent and Rathburn Road East, Carscadden Chase, Maple Ridge Drive, Dal-las Court, and the Fleetwood community includes Steepbank Crescent, Ridgewood, Silverplains Drive, Pagehurst Avenue and Pagehurst Court, Ponytrail Drive, Stonepath Crescent, Briarcrook Crescent; and

"Whereas the residents can no longer tolerate living under conditions similar to living in a war-torn region in that, when these airplanes fly by, their homes vibrate, their electronic equipment malfunctions, their children cry, and their mental and physical health are seriously challenged; and

"Whereas these concerns have been raised in a statement to the Legislative Assembly by Carl DeFaria, MPP, on December 7, 1998;

"We, the undersigned, hereby respectfully petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to urge the federal Liberal government to listen to the appeals of residents and enforce strict restrictions in the use of the north-south

runways at Pearson International Airport to be for use on an emergency basis only.”

I, as a member of provincial Parliament, affix my signature to this petition.

HOSPITAL FUNDING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas Ontarians are gravely concerned with the historic \$1.3-billion cuts to base funding of hospitals; and

“Whereas Ontarians feel that health services are suffering; and

“Whereas the government is reducing hospital funding and not reinvesting millions of dollars into the communities that they are being taken away from;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly to call on the Conservative government to stop the cuts to base funding for hospitals across Ontario and to ensure that community services are in place before the removal of hospital services. The Conservative government must fund hospitals with a funding formula that reflects demographic and regional needs. The Conservative government must ensure that health services are available, including emergency and urgent care, to all Ontarians.”

It's signed by my constituents, and I've affixed my own signature in full agreement.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

“Whereas the government of Ontario has imposed a politically motivated funding formula that will force the closure of hundreds of schools across Ontario; and

“Whereas the only reason for the funding formula is to justify removing more than \$1 billion from the education systems so that the wealthiest Ontarians can get a tax break; and

“Whereas schools are the heart of our communities and to close schools would be to cut the heart out of our communities; and

“Whereas a properly funded quality education system is critical to the well-being of the children of this province and to the future of the province itself;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“That the government of Ontario scrap the funding formula and save our schools by properly funding public education, starting with the return of more than \$1 billion taken out of education by the government of Ontario.”

I affix my signature to this.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 47 people from across the province.

“Whereas children are exposed to pornography in variety stores and video rental outlets;

“Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to pornography;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To enact legislation which will create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to pornography in retail establishments; prevent minors from entering establishments which rent or sell pornography; restrict the location of such establishments to non-residential areas.”

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): My petition reads as follows:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas since Mike Harris took office consumers across Ontario have been gouged by the large oil companies, who have implemented unfair and dramatic increases in the price of gasoline; and

“Whereas this increase in the price of gasoline has outpaced the rate of inflation by a rate that is totally unacceptable to all consumers in this province because it is unfair and directly affects their ability to purchase other consumer goods; and

“Whereas Premier Mike Harris and ministers within the cabinet of this government while in opposition expressed grave concern for gas price gouging and asked the government of the day to take action; and

“Whereas the Mike Harris government could take action under Ontario law and pass predatory gas pricing legislation which would protect consumers, but instead seems intent on looking after the interests of the big oil companies;

“We, the undersigned, petition Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to eliminate gas price fixing and prevent the oil companies from gouging the public on an essential and vital product.”

I affix my signature. I'm in complete agreement with this petition.

ROAD SAFETY

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario dealing with red light cameras making high-collision intersections safer.

“Whereas red light cameras can dramatically assist in reducing the number of injuries and deaths resulting from red light runners; and

“Whereas red light cameras only take pictures of licence plates, thus reducing privacy concerns; and

“Whereas all revenues from violations can easily be directed to a designated fund to improve safety at high-collision intersections; and

“Whereas there is a growing disregard for traffic laws, resulting in serious injury to pedestrians, cyclists, motorists and especially children and seniors; and

"Whereas the provincial government has endorsed the use of a similar camera system to collect tolls on the new Highway 407 tollway; and

"Whereas mayors and concerned citizens across Ontario have been seeking permission to deploy these cameras due to limited police resources;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"That the province of Ontario support the installation of red light cameras at high-collision intersections to monitor and prosecute motorists who run red lights."

I'm proud to affix my signature to this.

1540

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr John L. Parker (York East): I have here a petition signed by a large number of Ontario residents, including Mr John Van Asselt. It is addressed to the Legislature of Ontario and it reads as follows.

"Whereas this government has undertaken to reform the system of education funding to ensure fair funding for Ontario's children; and

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has stated that the province could, if it so chose, pass legislation extending funding to denominational schools other than Roman Catholic schools without infringing the rights guaranteed to Roman Catholic separate schools; and

"Whereas providing our children with an excellent education consistent with our cultural and religious beliefs is a necessity and not a matter of preference; and

"Whereas independent schools successfully educate children across the entire spectrum of learning abilities and special needs; and

"Whereas all children of taxpaying Ontario parents deserve to have funding distributed in a manner that does not discriminate against those not using the public or Catholic systems;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, respectfully request that the government take immediate steps to extend fair funding to all students of the province."

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): I'd like to read this petition. It's to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, and it states:

"Whereas essential public services have been deprived of government funding because the Conservative government of Mike Harris has diverted these funds to self-serving political propaganda ads in the form of pamphlets delivered to homes, newspaper advertisements and radio and television commercials; and

"Whereas the Harris government advertising blitz is a blatant abuse of public office and a shameful waste of taxpayers' dollars; and

"Whereas the Harris Conservatives ran on a platform of eliminating what it referred to as government waste

and unnecessary expenditures while it squanders over \$100 million on clearly partisan advertising;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government of Mike Harris to immediately end their abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising."

I've signed this petition as well.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition to save the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital.

"To the Honourable Lieutenant Governor and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned citizens of Hamilton and the surrounding communities, beg leave to petition the government of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has announced the closure of Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario through the Health Services Restructuring Commission is divesting its responsibility for mental health care without any consultation with the people of Hamilton-Wentworth; and

"Whereas the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital has a reputation for excellence and is a leader in providing mental health care services and many unique programs; and

"Whereas in 1998 the American Psychiatric Association awarded their gold award to the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital for its program on mood disorders; and

"Whereas both city and regional councils oppose the closure and more than 30,000 people have signed petitions opposing the hospital's closure; and

"Whereas the people of Hamilton-Wentworth will pay the price when the Harris government shuts down the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital;

"Therefore we, the people of Hamilton-Wentworth who care about quality, accessibility and publicly accountable mental health care, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital site open and deliver the services and programs from that location."

I add my name to these petitioners.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas children are exposed to pornography in variety stores and video retail outlets;

"Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to pornography;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To enact legislation which will create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to pornography in retail establishments; prevent minors

from entering establishments which rent or sell pornography; restrict the location of such establishments to non-residential areas."

That is from Orillia, Hawkestone and Marchmont. It is signed by approximately 25 people and myself.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This petition is to the government of Ontario:

"Whereas people across the country are marking the day of mourning for those who have died in the workplace; and

"Whereas the number of individuals injured and killed in workplace accidents remains at an unacceptably high level;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the government of Ontario to enact legislation and promulgate regulations designed to increase safety in the workplace and adequately compensate those injured on the job."

I affix my signature.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): It is a tradition for opposition leaders to respond to throne speeches. As leader of the NDP, I am pleased to do so today. But there is a problem. Usually we respond to the substance of a throne speech. Today that is difficult because there is no substance to the government's throne speech. There is no meat in the sandwich, no beef on the bull.

There was a lot of bull about leadership, but real leaders don't hide from the public. Real leaders don't depend on the Queen's representative to make campaign speeches for them. They don't beat up on people who can't fight back. They don't go after the most vulnerable people in the province. They don't hide behind a commission when they close hospitals in order to get the money to finance their income tax scheme for the wealthiest people in the province. They don't close down public hearings when the public starts to ask questions. Real leaders stand up. They take responsibility for what they have done.

Over the last three years I have challenged the Premier to defend his record on health care, on education and on the environment time and time again. I have made the challenge in several communities across the province. I've said we can debate on television, we can debate on the lawn at Queen's Park, we can debate at his favourite golf course. I am willing, but the Premier continues to find excuses why he can't defend his record. What's he

afraid of? I can only conclude that perhaps he is not up to the job. Maybe it's easier to play "let's pretend" than show real leadership.

That's what was in the throne speech. It was a script of a game called "let's pretend." If Siskel and Ebert saw it they would give it two thumbs down. The script was bad, but the acting was even worse. After being bullies of the schoolyard, the Harris Conservatives now want us to believe that they've become Boy Scouts. After four years of Americanizing and privatizing our health care system, they want us to think they're Tommy Douglas.

Ontarians deserve good government, not a game of "let's pretend." The struggles of people across this province are real. Most people in Ontario are putting in longer hours, working harder, struggling more than ever before and having a very tough time.

What did they hear in the throne speech? They heard the Harris government say that the debate about tax cuts is over. That may be true in the Albany Club but it's not true in the living rooms and kitchens of most people in Ontario. Most people in Ontario understand what's happening. They go back to what this Premier and the Conservative Party said in the spring of 1995. This Premier and his colleagues told people across Ontario: "There will be a 30% tax cut. There will be no cuts to health, no cuts to education and the money is going to come from somewhere over there."

People know that was completely untrue. They know there is no "over there." They know that the money to finance this so-called tax cut, which only benefits the most well-off, came directly out of health care, came directly out of education, came directly out of protecting the environment. It came directly out of important community services.

1550

People see through this game of "let's pretend." People also see through the game of "let's pretend" that my Liberal colleagues now want to play. It was in 1995 that Mike Harris said: "Thirty per cent tax cut, no cuts to health care, no cuts to education. The money will come from over there." People know it's not true now, but they see Liberals now saying: "Thirty per cent tax cut, money for health care, money for education. The money to do all this will come from somewhere over there." People know it wasn't true between 1995 and now, and they know that it's not true now and into the future.

The very agenda that was responsible for cutting health care, cutting education, cutting environmental protection and cutting important community services can't possibly be the agenda to restore those things. People know they were fooled once; people will not be fooled twice by the same rhetoric, the same agenda, just by changing the packaging of it a bit.

The vast majority of people in this province — modest-income families, middle-income families — know they haven't received a tax cut. Either whatever they were supposed to receive out of the so-called 30% tax cut they haven't seen or what little bit they've seen has been more than overwhelmed by the \$1,600-a-year

increase in tuition fees for university or college; more than overwhelmed by the prescription medicine copayment tax; more than overwhelmed by increases in property taxes; by new user fees for municipal services, for libraries, for recreation centres, for community centres; by motor vehicle registration fees. People know they are in fact paying more hidden taxes, more user fees, more administrative fees, more tuition fees than ever before.

The only people who got a tax cut were the 6% at the top of the income and wealth ladder who get over 25% of the money. That's where the tax cut went. Ordinary people in this province are paying for that very unbalanced and unfair tax scheme in dozens of ways and paying for it most severely of all through cuts to the health care system they need and cuts to the education system we all need. People see that; they understand it.

How does this government really feel about working families in Ontario? In the throne speech they boasted about Bill 31. That's the bill that encourages the intimidation of workers who try to organize unions. That gives non-construction employers like the Toronto-Dominion Bank the right to rip up agreements with construction unions and insist on lower wages.

The government has turned the clock back 50 years for working women and men. This is a government that has welcomed scabs into the workplace, thrown out successor rights, gutted wage protection, taken worker representatives off the Workers' Compensation Board, trashed an impartial system of professional arbitration and then frozen the wages of the lowest-paid workers in this province for four years. Anyone who works for minimum wage has had their wages frozen for four years by this government, at the same time that this government gives the wealthiest 6% more wealth than ever. That's the reality that families face when you get through this game of "let's pretend."

Did this help Ontario? Did it improve labour relations in Ontario? The TTC labour dispute is a case in point. This government had already cut the funding for Toronto transit, for GO Transit and for all the other urban transit organizations in the province, cut the funding, then downloaded it on to municipalities to find the money to finance their income tax scheme. That was the context.

Every urban transit authority, every urban transit service in this province is in trouble now, and that trouble will get worse in the out-years. When a symptom of that trouble showed up in the labour dispute at the TTC, what was this government's answer? To bring in very unfair legislation that would present the workers with a stacked arbitration system and insist that it be passed right away. That was their answer. That was also the answer of my Liberal counterparts. They were bully-boy tactics.

Don't sit down and talk about the realities of what's happening to urban transit. Don't talk about the desperate financial situation that you've put urban transit in. Simply use the bully tactics. Force them back to work, put on them a very unfair, unbalanced, biased arbitration system

that will not possibly result in a fair settlement, and then wipe your hands of it.

We've said we're having none of that. We're not prepared to participate in an unfair, unbalanced, unjust, stacked system. We've found that by inviting the two parties together, those people who are responsible for Toronto transit and who actually take responsibility — instead of this government, which tries to avoid responsibility — when talking to those who are responsible for the Toronto transit and talking to the leadership of the union, they were quite prepared to come together to find an agreement. You don't need to use bully-boy tactics. That was leadership. Instead, we've got a government here that confuses leadership with bullying people.

Has attacking working Ontarians helped our economy? That's what this government would have us believe. By freezing the wages of the lowest-paid workers, by attacking the right of those workers to organize and to bargain for themselves and to protect health and safety, they would have you believe that by doing away with those things, somehow the Ontario economy has been improved.

There are some interesting numbers that refute the government's case. In the years 1991-95 the number of person-days lost in Ontario from work stoppages varied between 371,000 and 580,000. Compare that to the Harris record in 1996-97, after this government threw out the most progressive labour legislation in North America. The number of days lost in Ontario from work stoppages went through the roof. In both 1996 and 1997 the person-days lost in each year was more than 1.9 million. What a terrible record.

What is our response? I want to be absolutely clear. New Democrats will immediately repeal Bill 7 and ban the use of scabs in Ontario workplaces. We will reinstate full successor rights for all workers. We will make sure that injured workers have the legislated right to receive fair treatment and compensation. We will restore full support for achieving and maintaining pay equity, as the law says we must. We will boost the wage for Ontario minimum-wage earners, 60% of whom are women, to \$7.65 an hour, which is the Ontario equivalent of the American minimum wage. I challenge any Conservative or any Liberal to show evidence that the increase in the minimum wage in the United States has resulted in any lost jobs. Even Republicans won't make that argument in the United States now.

Finally, we will bring back to Ontario the capacity for workers to strive for and to defend their own health and safety in the workplace, on what is the day of mourning for workers who have lost their life and who have been injured in the workplace. This government has the most despicable record of all in terms of doing away with the Occupational Disease Panel, in terms of firing and laying off the labour inspectors who used to ensure that workplaces were healthy and safe, in terms of doing away with some of the basic protections — the agencies and the organizations — that were there to promote health and safety in the workplace. This government has done

away with them. New Democrats will ensure that they are restored once again.

Working families in Ontario deserve more than what they got from this government's game of "let's pretend." They deserve more than one round after another of "let's pretend." As cynical as it sounds, the Harris government even wants 1.5 million Ontarians with disabilities to play along with their game of "let's pretend."

1600

When their three-page act was introduced, the outcry from the disabled community was long and loud, and for good reason. David Lepofsky is chairman of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee. That group represents some 85 organizations across the province. Mr Lepofsky described the outrage of people with disabilities. He said to reporters: "Premier Mike Harris has slapped us in the face. He has punched us in the stomach." We're talking here about some of the most vulnerable citizens in Ontario. We're talking about people who have to overcome in some cases a number of handicaps, who have to overcome not only their own physical handicaps, their own challenges in their life, but they have to overcome the challenges that society puts in front of them. What did the Premier do? He "has slapped us in the face. He has punched us in the stomach."

Last Thursday this government had an opportunity to change that direction, to show real leadership, but it didn't. The Harris government is once again asking Ontarians to accept their record on disability issues, to be content with a vague promise of additional input. One and a half million Ontarians with disabilities do not deserve another slap in the face, followed by vague promises.

These Ontarians deserve action on the 11 principles to which this House agreed unanimously last fall. They deserve action by a Harris government that told them four years ago that there would be action. New Democrats will stand by those principles and we will keep speaking out and keep fighting until they are entrenched in law. We will answer the slap in the face by continuing to raise these issues until they become the law of Ontario.

Then there's the issue of the environment. In the throne speech, the government tried to play "let's pretend" about the environment as well. They try to hide their dismal record behind their so-called Lands for Life process, or what is more accurately lands for litigation. That was a process where people who are unelected, who represent no one but themselves, who are accountable to no one but themselves, behind closed doors and in back rooms, without involving the very people who are going to be most affected by this such as native people who live in northern Ontario, pretended they could make these decisions and could avoid dealing with the very people who are going to be most affected.

Aboriginal people have said: "We're going to go to court. You're not going to force on us a strategy of intensive forestry, which means applying more and more herbicides and pesticides in the forest than ever before. You're not going to dump that on us." So they are going

to go to court. While the government may think they have a photo op, what they have in fact created is all kinds of strife, and Lands for Life is now lands for litigation.

I want to talk about what the Environmental Commissioner said today. I don't want to talk about a photo op. This government is famous for photo ops that have no substance. I want to talk about what the Environmental Commissioner has said four times now in the last four years. Three years ago the Minister of the Environment said that this government would test buses and trucks to ensure we had cleaner air. Well, that was three years ago; it's still not happening. They should call their strategy the omissions program, not the emissions program, because trucks and buses are completely left out. While working families must face inspections and pay to bring their cars up to some vague standards, corporate polluters can get away with almost anything.

The government is also playing "let's pretend" with its so-called smog patrol. They're pretending that nine staff will be able to patrol seven million vehicles — nine staff in the whole province to deal with seven million vehicles.

What about enforcement? The Harris government has cut the Ministry of the Environment budget by 45%. They've laid off 750 scientists, technicians, inspectors, monitors and technical experts. They've laid off the very people who used to enforce environmental protection, who used to do the inspections, the very people who used to prosecute the polluters. That's the true story about how protection of the environment has been weakened in Ontario.

What's the result? Fines and prosecutions are down from more than \$3 million a year under Ontario's first NDP government to less than \$1 million a year in 1997. Environmental enforcement was sacrificed to help pay for their so-called tax cut, which benefits only the wealthiest people in the province. They not only slashed the funding, they have tried to keep the public in the dark. They have narrowed down the environmental assessment process so they don't have to include public hearings. They've closed the door to the public.

The government gave a bright green light to big polluters to continue dumping toxic substances, with little regulation and no one to stop them. Ontario is now by far Canada's largest generator of hazardous waste. This province generates between 1.2 million and five million tonnes of hazardous waste each year. That's about 60% of the total produced in Canada. In the last four years, hazardous waste generated by Ontario industry has grown dramatically. There was a reported 50% increase in waste sent off-site for disposal between 1994 and 1997. That's the real record.

This government's negligence has real-life consequences. We're not talking about "let's pretend" when the Ontario Medical Association says that 1,800 people a year now die from air-pollution-induced diseases in this province. The government's response in the throne show: They tried to green-wash their record with a so-called conservation award. What were they thinking? If you

can't breathe the air and drink the water, maybe you'll feel better if you think about a conservation award? Is that the strategy?

New Democrats will hire 500 new environmental officers to inspect, monitor and enforce the environmental protection regulations of this province. We will implement the Ontario Clean Air Alliance targets to reduce the emissions from Ontario's electricity generating stations. We will move Ontario towards the goals of the Ontario campaign for clean air. We will introduce right-to-know legislation that will bring all information about the state of our environment to the surface, where it should be. No more trying to keep the people of Ontario in the dark concerning what's happening to our environment. No one is safe from this government's game of "let's pretend," not even children.

In the throne show, the government pretended to care about learning in the early years. This is the same gang who scrapped all 13 NDP pilot projects in early childhood education, the same gang who ended mandatory junior kindergarten, who cut thousands of daycare spaces, the same gang whose leader said four years ago that expanding education for young children was the most ridiculous recommendation he'd ever heard.

New Democrats will invest \$360 million to help protect community schools and keep them open, to protect junior kindergarten and early childhood education and adequately support special needs education and ensure that child care spaces are there for the children and families who need them. We will also change the funding formula so that it includes spaces for child care. It's an investment that Ontario must make and that only New Democrats will make.

1610

Ontario faces the growing tragedy of homelessness, but the government in its throne show kept playing its game of "let's pretend." This round was called "Let's pretend that homelessness does not exist." There was not one sentence, not one phrase, not one word dealing with the crisis of homelessness, even though we've started to see a new class of people without homes — families with children — and even though 38% of the people who are homeless in cities like Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton and London now carry the tuberculosis bacterium. The government's silence is appalling. It offends the core of decency that has always been part of the heart and soul of Ontario.

There is a solution to homelessness. It's called political will. New Democrats will restore real rent control. We will boost shelter allowances and create supportive housing. We will build 16,000 units of affordable housing over four years, as well as 14,000 units of supportive housing for people with psychiatric problems, addictions or other serious challenges. These are investments that Ontario must make, and only New Democrats will make them.

In the throne show script the government didn't talk about homelessness, but they did talk about the economy. What about the 540,000 jobs they bragged about? First of

all, let me point out that almost half of these so-called jobs are so-called self-employment jobs. They are people who have been downsized out of their jobs or outsized out of their jobs or who are the result of a complete corporate shutdown and now they are out there trying to promote themselves as self-employed, as consultants, as technical experts. Many of these people we know aren't employed at all. Many of them are simply out there on their own, which is the new definition for social responsibility under the Harris government: out there on your own.

A majority of the rest of the jobs are minimum-wage jobs. That's what they are. Every time Premier Harris stands up and brags that new jobs have been created under his government, I can honestly say to you, Speaker, that I know someone who has three of those jobs. They have one part-time job during the day, one part-time job in the evening and one part-time job on the weekend. They all pay minimum wage, and the person has to work at all three to even be close to making ends meet. That's the history of this government in terms of the economy. Those are the kinds of jobs that more and more are the reality under this government.

The numbers that this government trots out don't even begin to capture what's going on in the real world. They don't capture the anxiety too many people in this province feel as they work harder and harder, and feel less secure about their own jobs, trying to make ends meet. They don't take into account the growing gap between those who are well off and those who aren't, a gap made worse by Mr Harris's tax cut for the 6% at the top. If the Harris Conservatives dared to venture beyond staged photo opportunities to listen to real Ontarians, they would see a very different picture.

The government tried to get us to believe that Ontario is on the road to economic growth at the same time they are putting up roadblocks. The single most important key to success in this new knowledge economy is human capital. It's the ability and capacity of our own people. None of us refers to our kids or to ourselves as "human capital," but I agree with all those economists who are now coming forward and saying very clearly that investing in human capital, investing in our own people, is the single most important comparative advantage in this new knowledge economy.

The kind and the quantity of our natural resources isn't as important as it used to be. Neither is closeness to the market as important as it used to be. Technology has made these factors less important than they used to be. Even money, having your own captive supply of capital, isn't as important as it used to be. Investment banks are discovering that their own employees can transfer their investment capital around the world overnight without even telling them.

What's important in this new economy? What's important is having the most knowledgeable workforce, having a workforce that is talented, that is skilled, that has the capacity in this knowledge economy to apply itself and to create the new opportunities. But to get that,

to have a population of Ontarians who are skilled, who are knowledgeable, who are capable, who are talented, we must invest in them. We must invest in their communities; we must invest in their schools; we must invest in their colleges; we must invest in their universities.

But that isn't happening. This is a government that is cutting from the very community services that allow us to invest in our people. This is a government that takes pride in the fact that it has taken \$1.5 billion out of elementary and secondary education. This is a government that takes pride in the fact that our colleges and universities in Ontario are now funded at the lowest per capita rate in all of Canada. Even Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, poor agricultural provinces like Saskatchewan fund their colleges and universities at a higher per capita rate than Ontario.

If we look at the North American context, Ontario is next to the bottom in North America. Even states like Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana — for God's sake, even Arkansas — invest more in their colleges and universities per capita than Ontario does. At a time when investing in our people, investing in their knowledge, their skills, their capacity is more important than ever before, the Harris Conservatives are moving in the opposite direction.

What must we do? We know what we must do. New Democrats will immediately cut university and college tuition fees by 10%. Young people should not have to mortgage their future to get a higher education that not only helps them but helps our economy be more productive. Attracting their knowledge, maintaining their knowledge, maintaining their skills is the key to success. In fact, investors come to Ontario because of the quality, the skills, the knowledge of our workforce. They come here because of our capacity to be productive, not just because it's a good place to live but because it makes good economic sense.

If we continue to Americanize our health care system — that's what the Harris government's doing. If you look at home care, home care is being handed over to private, for-profit corporations, many of them American for-profit corporations. If you look at long-term care, it's being handed over to private, for-profit corporations. If you look at the downloading of public health and where that's going to end up, it will end up being privatized as well, Americanized. If you look at what's happening to ambulances, it's the same thing. Piece by piece by piece, the Harris government is Americanizing and privatizing our health care system.

It is absolutely the wrong direction. Why would anyone want to emulate or copy the American health care system where they spend more money on health care and yet close to 100 million Americans are almost totally left out? Why would we want to move to a system of health care where less and less of the health care dollar goes to treating patients and more and more of it goes to corporate bonuses, corporate salaries? That's not where we want to go, but clearly that is where we're going.

To give you an indication of how efficient our system of medicare, our system of publicly funded, publicly administered community-delivered health care is, to give you an idea of how efficient it is, we only need to look back at the period 1993-94 during an NDP government. During that government the Big Three in the auto industry — Chrysler, Ford and General Motors — invested \$6 billion in the auto industry, the largest single reinvestment ever in the auto industry in the province.

The reasons they made that investment are very interesting. When you talk to them, one of the reasons they want to make those investments is not because of the exchange rate, not because of a tax rate, not because some government is trying to force down the wages of those workers. They made it — one of the single big reasons — because of the efficiency of our health care system. Purchasing health care here in Ontario under medicare, the public system of medicare, saves them hundreds of dollars per vehicle compared to private sector health insurance in Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and elsewhere in the United States.

The investments we've made in medicare not only make good health care sense, not only make good social sense; they make good economic sense as well.

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We've seen in the last few days that this government is now driving around the province trying to shovel money out the back end of the truck, back into the health care system to cover up the damage they've done. We've seen that. But despite their rhetoric, this government is determined to Americanize and privatize health care, not by the front door but by the back door. That's why 70% of the new long-term-care contracts have been awarded to private, for-profit companies. That's why the majority of the new contracts for home care are going to private, for-profit companies. It is an assault on the principles of the Canada Health Act.

What must be done? What must be done is simply this:

New Democrats will stop the move to American-style, for-profit health care and home care.

New Democrats, and only New Democrats, will invest an additional \$250 million immediately in home nursing, homemaking and personal support services.

New Democrats will stop the destructive, cutthroat bidding wars for home care contracts that lead to unrealistically low bids, low wages for health care workers and poor service.

Health care investment should go into patient care, not into profits for private companies.

I won't go into detail about our guarantee for assessment by registered nurses in all emergency wards in hospitals across the province within 15 minutes. I won't need to go into detail about that because after we announced it two months ago and after we showed people how it would work, first the Conservatives and then the Liberals adopted it. I don't need to persuade either this government or the Liberals about the wisdom of the

direction the New Democrats have set out for health care. After studying it for two months they've accepted it.

But there is one big difference. The difference is this: We know how we can pay for our investments in health care, our investments in education, our investments in the environment, our investments for the homeless. We know how we can pay for it. We know that by rolling back the so-called 30% income tax scheme for the 6% at the top, it will give us \$1.5 billion a year to reinvest in health care, reinvest in education and reinvest in the community services that will do the most good for the most people.

Conservatives will talk about the money being somewhere over there. Liberals will talk about the money being somewhere over there in an imaginary place. New Democrats know where we will find the money to implement these commitments, we know where we can find the money, we know how to pay for these commitments and it will not add one cent to the deficit of the province.

We will also put in place a Patients' Bill of Rights, not the bill of goods the government has talked about. Our bill of rights sets standards for health care to hold governments accountable. It also guarantees whistle-blower protection for health care workers. High-quality health care for Ontarians when and where they need it is an investment that Ontario must make and it's an investment that only New Democrats will make.

The further you go into the throne show script, the worse it gets. The Harris government wants to institutionalize their underfunding not only of health care, but also of education and also of communities. They intend to introduce their so-called appearance of a balanced budget legislation, and the Liberals are cheering them on. This kind of legislation would make the funding cuts to health care, to education and to communities an institutional reality.

The throne show was pap and empty rhetoric but it did make one thing clear: The only thing this government stands for and is willing to fight for is a tax cut for the wealthiest 6% in Ontario at the expense of everyone else. They have done and will do absolutely anything it takes to pay for it. They will suck \$4.5 million a day from essential services to give the wealthiest 6% that tax cut. They will sacrifice services that Ontarians count on and believe in. They will sacrifice medicare, they will sacrifice public education, they will sacrifice the community services we all need, all the things that have made this one of the best places in the world to live and one of the most productive places in the world to live.

I am proud that New Democrats were the first to put our campaign vision on the table where it can be examined in the light of day. We will roll back the Harris tax cut for the 6% at the top who get more than 25% of the money. That will give us the \$1.5 billion that we need to reinvest in health and education and our communities, and we will put that money where it will do the most good for the most people.

Our commitments are specific. They are costed out and they will not add a single cent to the deficit. Our plan is focused, it's disciplined and it's doable. Others promise to reinvest, but they too are playing "let's pretend." Others will talk about the money that might come from somewhere over there, but it only underscores the fact that they have no idea how to accomplish the necessary reinvestments in health care, in education and in the communities that we all need.

Some people count on an imaginary surplus. Some of them want to have us believe that they can go to their uncle, the finance minister in Ottawa, and ask for more transfer money; the same finance minister that has cut \$3 billion a year from post-secondary education and put none of it back; the same Liberal finance minister in Ottawa who cut \$3 billion a year from health care and put only a fraction of it back: Uncle Paul Martin. They want Uncle Paul Martin to increase their allowance.

I have a simple message to all those Ontarians who know that investments in health care are more important than a tax cut for the well off, who know that investments in education are far more important than a tax cut for the well off, who know that protecting our environment is more important than a tax cut for the well off. To all those Ontarians who are sick of playing "let's pretend," I can tell you New Democrats hear you, and we are clearly on your side.

We have a plan to remedy the damage that has been done to health care and to education and to the environment. We have a detailed strategy that will help us pay for it and put us back on the right road. We will stand up and fight for what we and a million Ontarians know in our heads and in our hearts is the right thing to do: Fight for an Ontario where everyone, not just the well-off, have the opportunity to succeed and no one is left behind.

It's time to stop playing "let's pretend." It is time to start working for and looking out for all those Ontarians who need a good medicare system, all those Ontarians who know we need a good education system, colleges and universities that are funded adequately and all those Ontarians who know that we must protect our environment. If we fail to, the costs down the road multiply and will surely cause us all kinds of pain.

New Democrats speak to and for all of those Ontarians. It's time to stop playing "let's pretend." It's time for people to know who is on their side. New Democrats are on the side of hard-working Ontarians across this province and we intend to make the difference, to turn this province around and put us on the road we want to be on, not just a road that benefits the 6% at the top.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Pursuant to the order of the House dated April 26, 1999, the debate is adjourned and the House is adjourned until 6:30 this evening.

The House adjourned at 1633.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

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Gouvernement
Publications

No. 4B

N° 4B

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

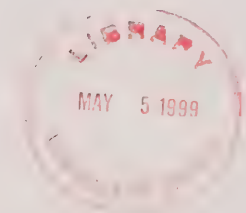
Troisième session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Wednesday 28 April 1999

Mercredi 28 avril 1999



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Wednesday 28 April 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mercredi 28 avril 1999

The House met at 1830.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

THRONE SPEECH DEBATE

DÉBAT SUR LE DISCOURS DU TRÔNE

Resuming the adjourned debate on the amendment to the motion for an address in reply to the speech of Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor at the opening of the session.

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): It was to be Mr Cleary to have the floor, but he's not here.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: It was my understanding that Mr Cleary asked to divide his time and that unanimous consent was given.

The Acting Speaker: I don't agree with your arguments, I should say. It's the turn of the third party. Debate?

Mrs Marion Boyd (London Centre): I'm very pleased to have an opportunity to speak tonight on the speech from the throne because I think the government had great effrontery to produce a speech from the throne that had so little substance to it, that had so many political overtones to it, quite out of keeping with the traditions of this place and quite unnecessary, in fact, given the point at which they obviously have arrived, given the kind of advertising they've been doing and their push towards an election.

Of all the issues we are trying to deal with in the province of Ontario, the ones that people want dealt with are those in the areas of health and education and community services, and everything that the government does tries to divert the attention of the voting population away from those issues.

Before I came to this place, I worked in counselling with battered women, and woman after woman who was in an abusive situation with her partner would come to me and talk about a form of abuse, a form of emotional abuse, psychological abuse that was pretty well experienced by most of those abused women. The abuser's technique was to try to convince his victim that what she perceived to be reality, what her experience in the world was, was not true, that something else entirely was what was really happening. Things that had been said one day were denied the next day; things that had been presented

in one way one day were presented in another way the next day. We used to call it, in the vernacular, a crazy-making technique, because what it did was make those who were under that constant psychological abuse question themselves, question their own perceptions, question their ability to look at issues, to analyze them, to make decisions and then to stick to those decisions.

Quite frankly, the techniques that the government of the day is using with the population of Ontario directly echo that mechanism of psychological abuse. This government, day after day, stands up in this House and appears in our living rooms, at our expense, telling us that what we perceive to be reality in our lives and in our communities is not the case. They try to tell us that the reality is very different from how we experience it, and they hope that they will be able to break down the ability of the voters of Ontario to perceive truth from falseness and the ability of the voters of Ontario to judge them on what will be their judgment day, election day.

One of the realities of life in this province since this government took office is that most of their activities have involved communication. They tell us, when we disagree with them, that we don't understand them and they haven't communicated well enough. They refuse to accept that there are large numbers of people in this province, more than half the people in this province, who do not agree with what they are doing, and they try to convince us by a bombardment of advertising, for which we have paid through our tax dollars, which purports to be a message from the government of Ontario when in fact it is a political propaganda tool from Mike Harris.

I don't know whether this propaganda tool will work in most ridings. I know that when I go door to door in my riding, I hear voter after voter telling me how their intelligence is being maligned by this government, by these tactics. I know it is an offence to a lot of people in London North Centre that their tax dollars, instead of going to improve health care, to improve education, are going to bolster the fortunes of a government that tomorrow night plans to have a dinner that will raise over \$2 million for their party coffers. It's not that the government party doesn't have lots of money; that's not why they're spending public dollars for their propaganda. That's not it at all. It's because they want to skew the impression, that somehow this is not politics, that somehow the representations they're making to the people of Ontario are reality, that they're not a fantasy.

But we know, those of us who are constituent representatives, that black is not white, that everything is not

OK in health care, that however many CEOs of however many grateful corporations can be called in to do announcements and vindicate the government about the bit of money that's been thrown back into the system, there are many others who are prepared to identify the flaws in the actions of this government and what is affecting our constituents day by day.

Most of the members here know that I try not to be the kind of person who chases ambulances and comes in with horror stories, because I know very well how difficult it is for families who have been through the wringer of this health system to hear their stories bandied about in public. But when you face a propaganda machine such as has been set up by this government trying to convince people that their reality is not true, you have to counter it with the realities that people are experiencing.

In counselling, we call it a reality check: "They say this is the case. Have you experienced that or have you a different experience?" Trust yourself, trust your own experience and know that your experience is worth more than the most slickly produced propaganda ads that any government can ever produce.

I do believe very strongly that people are not the gullible fools this government obviously believes them to be. I don't think my riding is exceptional in being so offended by the willingness of this government to use its power, to use its tax dollars to further its own end. More and more people in the province every day are asking every time the government comes up with a policy statement: "So who is going to benefit from this? Who is going to be the beneficiary of this?" Usually the answer is those who have the most — those who have the most wealth, those who have the most power, those who least need the intervention of government to protect them. Those are the people who benefit from the policies of this government.

Day by day it becomes very clear that this government has aligned itself with only a small segment of the population. This is not a government that follows in the tradition of Progressive Conservative governments of my childhood, where those governments believed that part of their job was to represent everybody in Ontario, not just their friends. This government has chosen sides and this government has chosen to take the side of those who least need protection, those who least need advocacy, those who least need all of the benefits conferred on them by the power of this government.

This government is part of the problem of the growing gap between the rich and poor in this province and in this country. They came into government denigrating the whole purpose of government. They come in day by day and tell us how useless it is for us to debate in this place, to have a public, democratic process that makes decisions. They're very clear that they're going to make decisions on behalf of their friends and the people who support them. It doesn't matter what the rest of us say, because they have already lined up all their power, all their resources on the side of their friends.

Who are those friends? They're the friends who are going to benefit from the existing tax cut, those 6% of people in Ontario who have managed to get 25% of the results of the 30% tax decrease, people who stand to gain, in some cases, by millions of dollars and in many other cases by hundreds of thousands of dollars from the tax cut that this government has put in. Every year that happens, the gap grows between the rich and the poor, because, of course, we can't forget that at the other end of the scale this government has maintained the minimum wage at the same level for four years, this government has cut social assistance to the poorest, this government has made it more difficult for those who are disabled to get assistance if they weren't already on the plan and this government has consistently put into place policies that force people on low incomes to pay user fees, to pay a whole plethora of new expenses that take no account of how much money they have.

1840

When the government imposed the co-pay on medications under the drug benefit plan, the members of this government said, "What's \$2 a prescription?" Well, \$2 for a prescription is a lot of money if you're a single person on welfare and you get \$520 a month and you have to try and find accommodation in this province with very little support for low-income families to get accommodation, and you happen to have a chronic health problem and require 10, 12, 15 prescriptions a month. Two dollars times 10 is \$20; times 15 is \$30. Of the disposable income you have left over from that low amount you get on social assistance — that has to pay for your food, that has to pay for any insurance that you might have, that has to pay to clothe you, that has to pay for transportation — \$20 or \$30 out of that pot is a lot of money.

"Well," says the government, "there are many companies that have dropped on board, like Shoppers Drug Mart, who are willing to forgo the \$2 prescription rate." Only what does that mean? That means you're tied to their pharmacy. "That's just good business," say the pharmaceutical companies and the large corporations, only it doesn't take account of whether that's the most appropriate place for seniors, for the disabled, for the poor to get their prescriptions. It doesn't take into account that they may have to travel by transit in order to get their prescriptions, because, of course, there isn't free delivery for them — and very often that's the case: it's a trade-off between free delivery and paying your co-pay.

So everything is dividing the rich and the poor, and every single action that this government takes creates a huge gulf between those of us who are privileged, who have enough, and those who consistently fall short of what they need for a decent and dignified life.

The policies of this government and, I may say, the federal Liberal and before it the federal Progressive Conservative government, are largely responsible for that growing gap between the rich and the poor. We know, because we have the advice of many who have studied the societies that have gone this way, that taking this

route eventually leads a society into more and more costs that spiral and escalate that gap between rich and poor, that make a world of "them" and "us," that create a situation where those who have spend lots of money protecting themselves against those who have not, and those who have not fall deeper and deeper into the pit and have less and less commitment to a civil society. Yes, we spend less money on education, but we spend more money on policing and on corrections. We spend less money on social housing and we spend more money making sure that those who don't have homes don't attack us in our homes. That's the cost of a society where the gap grows between the rich and the poor, and every single policy of this government leads us further and further down that track.

Now they tell us in this throne speech that they have this fantastic idea: They're going to increase the gap again by lowering taxes. They're going to attack again the very fabric of our communities by lowering taxes. I want to talk about this mythology of taxes being the problem. Taxes are not the problem in our society. Taxes are in fact our decision as a society about how to share the wealth that we have, to make sure that we narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. Taxes are the ability that we have as government to ensure that the runaway fortunes of those at the top of the scale at least are shared to a small extent with those who do not have the same privilege, do not have the same good fortune. And believe me, it's good fortune.

There's a social Darwinism that prevails in right-wing political thinking, and it goes something like this: Survival of the fittest is the name of the game, and if you're poor, if you don't have a home, if you haven't been able to get an education, then somehow it's your fault; you're not fit enough. And everyone who has is somehow better than everyone who has not.

That's a theory that is usually put forward by people who already were beyond the threshold of opportunity long before they came to work towards their own good fortune. We have a whole generation of people who have come along with much greater privilege because of the work of our parents and our grandparents in a very extraordinary period of our economy, a highly socially upwardly mobile period of our economy, where the things we may take for granted in my generation were never taken for granted by the previous generation.

What we see is our children facing the reality that that upward mobility, that ability to amass personal goods and so on, had very little to do with the individual effort of people and a whole lot to do with the economic upturn that happened in the post-war period, unprecedented in economic history. We don't see the same future for our children, and we know, when we get together as parents of my generation, that our children do not have as many automatic opportunities as we had in that very, very upwardly mobile time.

I don't know about you. I know my child works very hard. I know lots of her friends who work very hard, who are bright, who are committed, who do everything they

can to earn a living, and many of them can't find work in their field. Many of them have physical or mental problems that make it difficult for them to get ahead. Many of them find themselves in the position of never having had permanent, secure work that enables them to show their talent and to show their commitment.

It's getting worse every day for kids who don't have privilege, who don't have that little leg up that it takes because they can't afford college and university, they can't afford to get to the threshold so they have opportunities like those whose families can present it to them on a platter.

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): It's very interesting to listen to the presentation from the member for London Centre tell us about how we could have a perfect world, and maybe that's what they thought was happening during their five-year term. I do have some empathy for the problems they had. I heard Bob Rae say that he wanted to form the government and be the Premier in the worst way, and that's exactly how he got it: in the worst way, the way the Liberals had left it for them. With the Liberals, the economy was headed downhill. They claimed there was a balanced budget when there wasn't a balanced budget, misleading the public as they tend to do.

It was interesting that she talked about the future of our children and having some concerns for them. I can tell you that this is the most compassionate government the province has ever seen, concerned about the children of the future. Where we were going — the Liberals doubled the spending and then the NDP doubled the debt — that was a terrible legacy to leave for our children.

1850

This government is about stimulating the economy. It's about having the quality of leadership that's leading us out of that decade of wandering in the economic desert of Ontario, and we are now going places. We've developed a strong economy, and with that strong economy we can have a strong, vibrant health care. We can have some quality education and have dollars for education. We can also have a very protective social program which the people you are referring to require and need. But the kind of program that you brought along and that the Liberals brought along was encouraging people to be on welfare, not encouraging them to get off. Work for welfare is not punitive; it's all about helping people get out and earning —

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to my colleague from London Centre, whose opinions I take very seriously, though we differ on many issues. I want to begin by concurring with her.

I sense the anxiety across the aisle. Having spent more than \$100 million on advertising in the last year, that government is still plagued by mistrust. People don't trust you on health care. They don't trust you on education. I don't doubt your motivation. I wouldn't suggest for a minute that your motivations are wrong, but

the so-called tough decisions you've made have been the wrong decisions. It was wrong when you closed 39 hospitals without proper consultation. It was wrong when you changed the education funding formula to force the closure of schools all over Ontario.

You have benefited by the robust economic growth we've experienced as a result of the federal Liberal government, I must say, as I pay tribute to my friend and colleague from Windsor, Paul Martin, and Jean Chrétien. You have benefited from that in a way that you couldn't possibly have anticipated.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. You give it; you take it.

Mr Duncan: You've benefited in ways that you never thought possible.

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Order. The member for Northumberland, I want you to withdraw that word.

Mr Galt: Withdrawn.

The Acting Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Duncan: He can't control himself.

You've benefited in ways you never thought possible. Good for the federal Liberals. We look forward to the election campaign.

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): I'm delighted to take this opportunity to comment on the remarks made by my colleague from London Centre. She began her comments talking about what I would have to say is a credibility gap. She talked about the advertising campaign that the previous speaker referred to, the \$100 million, and was trying to paint a very, very rosy view of the world, and she said, "This contrasts with people's daily experiences."

I can think of no better example than just a year ago September when I was knocking on doors in my by-election. People told me more than once, more than twice — it didn't matter who was with me at the door, they all said the same thing to me — that these cuts the government had brought in had reduced services in health care, had closed hospitals, had overloaded home care, had cut community services, had taken money out of classrooms, and they were telling me that it wasn't worth this income tax cut if the result was all these losses in services.

I'm proud to be with a party that actually has a fiscal program that can finance the repair that's needed to this Harris agenda. I'm very proud, because that was the one salient efficiency with the people who went with me door to door. They stood there; they heard the message that this income tax cut wasn't worth all this damage.

There are not millions of dollars of government funding on advertising that can change people's real-life experiences. They know they had to wait longer in emergency rooms. They know that hospitals had to let nurses go. They know what happened when the municipalities got overloaded with these downloaded provincial services. They know what happened to the special education program for their children. They know these things and they know who's responsible.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): I'm pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the comments made by the member for London Centre. It may come as some surprise to the member for London Centre that I agree with a lot of what she had to say, particularly her remarks in terms of jobs and opportunities.

Far too often one of the fundamental beliefs in our society has been that this generation could do better than the previous generation. That is very much in question in the 1990s and that's a real concern. It should be a concern for all of us in all parties, so I completely share that view. It's not recognized across the country as much as it should be, but I certainly wholeheartedly agree with her there.

What we must do is have a plan to grow the economy, a plan to help the private sector and to help the economy create jobs. When I looked at the numbers behind some of the thoughts that the member for London Centre made, I was quite startled. In fact, by 1995 peoples' standards of living had fallen dramatically from the 1980s. What we've seen in the last four years is that real after-tax income for working families in Ontario has increased by \$260 more money a month that they can take home to increase their standard of living.

Despite that phenomenal gain, it's still behind what it was in 1989, and we've got to recommit ourselves as a Parliament and as a province to turning that around. What we need is strong and effective leadership for a strong Ontario, to grow the economy, to cut taxes, to cut red tape, to take the difficult but necessary decisions to turn our economy around.

Just in my home constituency of Bells Corners on Tuesday, 400 new jobs at the Compaq call centre. I'm going to be attending next week the groundbreaking for a new high school in Stittsville, Ontario, where the community of parents really fought hard. The expansion of the Queensway Carleton Hospital: A \$23-million grant from the province is part of that. Unemployment has fallen from 10.9% to 6.1%. Do we really want to put that at risk? I don't think so.

The Acting Speaker: Response?

Mrs Boyd: I want to thank the member for Northumberland, the member for Windsor-Walkerville, the member for Ottawa West and the member for Nepean for their comments, but I'd like to concentrate some of my discussion on the two Tory members who spoke.

The member for Northumberland tried to talk about the fact that they were the most compassionate government that has ever existed because they were taking away the deficit that was weighing down our young people. This is an example of the kind of hyperbole that people don't believe. They do not know and do not believe that a government is compassionate that took away junior kindergarten funding from many children in this province, that ended child care availability for many children in this province, that saddled students in colleges and universities with huge tuition fees and without an improved student loan program that puts them behind the eight ball.

When both the member for Northumberland and the member for Nepean talk about people being able to have a better standard of living —

Interjection.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Nepean, you had your turn.

Mrs Boyd: — many of those students today that you say you're being so compassionate to will never have the opportunity to buy a home or a car or to start a professional practice, because of the debt they carry, because of your tuition fees.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Perth.

Mrs Boyd: We've all been doing fundraising, so you understand my automatic response.

What we have to recognize and what was not dealt with is that the growing gap between haves and have-nots is affecting us all and will affect us into the future. I beg of the members of this place not to make fun of that problem. It is a very serious one which all of us must address in the coming election because it affects so many of our constituents.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr E.J. Douglas Rollins (Quinte): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to get up and make some comments about the throne speech tonight.

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Mr Gerretsen: Tell them about the gas prices.

Mr Rollins: Oh, the gas prices. John, drive through Belleville and you'll get it a little cheaper than you will in most places.

It was very interesting to listen to the last speaker, with this economy that we have and with the 540,000 net new jobs we have.

I heard the Minister of Education say in this House just the other day that there are more people registered for college and university this year than ever in the history of Ontario. If what they're saying is true, then the cost of that education is wrong.

I'd like to point out to you that up until this government came to power and changed the structure of the education system and the tuition fees, a goodly number of art students had a hard job finding a job when they graduated. They had to do the Beckers jobs and the McDonald's jobs because there weren't jobs for them out there in the field they were educated in. Yet you could have a doctor or an engineer paying the same kind of tuition, and when they graduated, there were jobs waiting for them.

I think this is something this government and this Minister of Education have put in the right place, so that for people who are graduating with an opportunity to make an excellent income, their tuition has been raised. I think that's one of the things that as a government I want to be a part of.

I know some of the hurt we have in this province. Yes, we had a terrible deficit of some \$11 billion to try to overcome and make sure we had a balanced budget, but we've done that in a period of four years. We've brought it back down. Probably next Tuesday in the budget you

will be listening to a deficit of \$3 billion. It may be a little bit lower or a little bit higher, but it's down to that kind of deficit.

At the same time, we've given back to the people of Ontario a lot of dollars in their paycheques so that they've been able to help this economy.

I know in the previous five years, according to the statistics that are out there, there were some 10,000 net jobs lost. When we said in our Common Sense Revolution that we would produce some 750,000 net new jobs in five years, everybody said we were way off target. If we had another year like we've just finished added on to the numbers, we would be awfully close to 700,000 net new jobs. I don't think that's a small part in any way.

When you add up the number of dollars that are coming into the province, some \$5 billion more per year today than when we took office some four years ago, I think that's something that helps out. That's one of the reasons we need to spend some money in different places.

I know the taxes were cut 69 times. There are different departments where we have saved taxes or reduced taxes 69 times. We haven't increased taxes like past governments have. I think that's something that's got to be very complimentary to this government and to the people who are in the finance department, to make sure we can still keep paying our bills and still put that kind of decrease on personal income tax. We are back to being the leading province in Canada in paying income tax as far as the provincial part is concerned. If we can lower that again in this next budget, so be it.

It's another increase. Family incomes after taxes have increased, on average, some \$3,000 a year. That is a very significant amount of money, yet the people on the other side say, "We haven't had a raise in pay in a long time." I can tell you that when you knock back the provincial income tax by some 30%, that is a raise in pay. It may not be a raise in your hourly rate, but it has certainly raised the pay that you can put in your pocket, take home and buy something with. You can buy something at the corner store, you can buy a new car, you can buy a new washer or dryer or improve your house. Those are the kinds of dollars you can really count on. It isn't dollars that are put in there.

This province has turned the economy around. There's no question that when we were put in power four years ago we were losing jobs by the hour. We were going the wrong way. We certainly have got on the right track, as long as we stay on that track.

It's not an easy course to stay on. In my own riding of Quinte, back in Belleville, Procter and Gamble went through a real competition with the States to see whether it was a plant in the States which was going to stay open or whether it was one in Belleville. Belleville happened to win out. One of the reasons we won out is that our health care system in Ontario is better. Our income tax is better. One of the best things is the standard of living in Ontario, with the competition from down in the States,

and a much higher standard of living. That's why the company chose to expand the Belleville plant.

The Belleville plant has just finished hiring some 100 new employees. It spent a period of about six months doing that. That other line is up and running and that production is there. Those jobs, regardless of whether the opposition tells us that they're McDonald jobs and all the rest of the McJobs they want to call them, are somewhere between \$15 and \$20 an hour. Those are the kind of jobs that have come to the city of Belleville.

Another company in Belleville, Halla Climate Control, has expanded. They went from some 200 people working to some 400.

Interjection.

Mr Rollins: I know the member from Kingston is all upset about that, but I think one of the reasons is he's just a little bit jealous about being able to make sure we can have that. The take-home pay for those people has increased along with those wages because of that tax decrease.

One thing we've got to really look after is our debt and make sure that our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren aren't saddled with a debt that's going to be so cumbersome to them that they will never have the opportunity to enjoy the same kind of lifestyle that, Mr Speaker, you and I have been able to enjoy in this fair province.

To maintain Ontario's economic growth requires a clear plan for the future. I think as a government, under the strong leadership of Mike Harris and his team, we have shown the foresight to make sure that we're in a position where we can make sure the economy stays strong. There's nothing that makes the province of Ontario any better, whether it's in my riding of Quinte or whether it's in Trenton or wherever it is, than having the economy very strong.

We went through some changes in our riding. A hydro project on the Trent River has been sitting there for some eight or 10 years under development, and they haven't been able to get the things in the right place to be able to go ahead with that project. This spring they've started, and that's going to take some 2,000 man-hours of work a year to make sure that hydro plant is built and put up in operation. It's not going to come on line until about the year 2001. With those kinds of hours to work there, there are about eight or 10 people. They're digging rock out and putting that equipment in there. It's going to help generate some clean power. It's water power off the Trent River. That's the kind of power that, once again, we as a government want to see happen.

One of the other things that was very interesting to hear today in the House was when the Minister of Labour stood up and said finally we're starting to get some teeth in it, some legislation to make sure that we aren't losing our good jobs to the people in Quebec and allowing them to come in and bid on jobs when we haven't got the same kind of privilege. I know you think Quebec work is just along the borders, but I can tell you that in my riding of Quinte some Quebec workers have been into our area on

different projects. I think those are the kinds of things that as a government we need to be very proud of and be able to stand up and make sure that those people are looked after in the same fashion, that we in Ontario have the right to go in there.

Talking a little bit about the health care system, yes, we had to restructure the health care system. I don't know whether everybody thinks the only time they've ever had to wait in a waiting room has just been in the last three or four years. I can tell you that going back 20 years ago there were lots of times that people would sit in the halls for 15 and 20 hours and could see only a doctor; there wasn't the operating room.

Interjections.

Mr Rollins: The people across the hall stand there and holler and yell, but the federal government took some \$17 billion away from the health care and the education system in the province. They said Uncle Paul Martin — Uncle Paul Martin and his red pen took away \$17 billion. They've given us back —

Mr Gerretsen: That's nonsense.

Mr Rollins: Over the years. Add it up. I don't know where you've been using your calculator. It's \$17 billion —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

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Mr Rollins: When they turn around and give us back \$1 billion for one year, it is a big gift. All we want back is the \$17 billion that you took away from us, Mr Martin, and we'll have a lot more nurses working in hospitals. "We're giving you back something new." They're not giving us back anything new. They're taking away some of the things; they're keeping it away from us. They're giving us back our own candy, and I think that's a little bit hard.

In Belleville and Trenton, Bancroft and Picton, we had a problem with our hospitals because we had four managers, we had four CEOs, we had four boards running hospitals. Yes, through the amalgamation and bringing it together, now we're down to one. I think when you take the money that we were spending on management and making sure that the hospital operation in four different locations had the same kind of operations — we've amalgamated it together. Did it amalgamate together without some pain and effort? Absolutely not. The Belleville hospital board, the Trenton board and the Picton board all had their turf that they wanted to protect. But we did manage to get them together. They had quite a few meetings where the doors were slammed and people left, but we brought them back to the table time and time again until finally, this year, they made the commitment that they would go together and have one CEO. The thing is starting to get into shape and the dollars are flowing, not to the management but down to the where the work is.

I can tell you, having visited on more than one occasion the emergency at Belleville General Hospital — lots of times — that there have been no lineups. A year ago, when my mother had problems with a heart attack and it

happened to be on Easter Sunday, we went into a very empty emergency ward. Did we get help? Yes, we got help. We had excellent care.

But I'll tell you, there are times there is a large lineup. There need to be some things done and changes in the health system. We've got a lot more people to put through the same system and we've got to make sure that we have some more doctors. Doctors are one of the problems in rural Ontario, and we certainly have that problem in Belleville. We're short a few doctors, no question about it. I thought the previous Minister of Health had an excellent idea, to make those tickets available to the new graduating doctors out in rural Ontario and let them move out there. But the doctors didn't feel that was the best system, so they went to the 30% reduction in the overserved areas. It has probably helped some, but it hasn't helped enough.

When we took office four years ago, Trenton was in dire need of doctors. Through hard, diligent work, they managed to achieve a few of those new doctors coming out. At the present time Trenton is not too badly off, but Belleville has had a couple of older doctors retire and a couple have moved away. Yes, a couple have moved to the States, but I can also tell you that those doctors who moved to the States came back into the Ontario system. They were away only two or two and a half years. They said they weren't satisfied with the way they were working in the States, the hours of work they were putting in and also the rate of pay, because down there you have to collect your own money. There's no guarantee that those monies are going to be there.

I think of the long-term-care plan. In Hastings county and in the Belleville-Quinte area, we're very fortunate to be one of the few areas in the province — and I think a lot of that goes back to the extended care program of a predecessor of mine, Dr Richard Potter, who was Minister of Health. He was one of the first ones who started that long-term care. It was one of the projects that was started in Belleville, and I think that's one of the reasons that in Hastings and Prince Edward, in that area down there, we're fortunate enough to have enough care that the people around there do not have problems finding rooms in some of the nursing homes. Yes, there are times they have trouble getting into the nursing home they may want, but with the community care access centre being opened up, if people want to move from one place to another when there's a room available, they are allowed to do that. I think the Minister of Long-Term Care has had a lot to do with putting more money in.

We just opened a new facility in Belleville a week ago Friday, and the facility they have there is certainly very acceptable. I know 20,000 new long-term-care beds were the first in a decade that the province of Ontario has had. We couldn't do that if we hadn't had the strong economy and more money coming into the province of Ontario to make sure that those beds were allowed to be opened up and put in.

The growing economy has made it possible for the provincial government to increase health care spending

by \$1.5 billion. I can say that four years ago we had a government on the other side that said, yes, they would freeze the health care budget exactly where it was. I think at that time it was something like \$7.4 billion or \$7.2 billion, and one of the other parties said they were going to increase it —

Mr Gerretsen: Seventeen.

Mr Rollins: Excuse me, \$17.4 billion or \$17.2 billion, and the other party said, "We're going to increase it by \$200,000." Well, \$200,000 is a far cry from the \$1.5 billion that we as a government have seen fit to increase it by, even at the same time as the feds decided they would take somewhere around \$3 billion a year away from us and cut us back. When you add that up, it certainly is a lot of money that we have to look after.

I want to talk a little bit more about the education that we talked about as far as universities are concerned. When we first started changing the schools, we had very little co-operation from very few teachers and very few principals on Bill 160, where they thought we were on the right line. But I can tell you, in talking to many of the teachers and principals today, if you start to listen to what is happening, they are more satisfied than they were. When you ask a bunch of teachers, is it right that they should have their principals and vice-principals in the union, most of them have started to realize that it is better with them out of the system, because then there's a different grievance position, that when the principal or vice-principal makes a ruling on it, it does put some different management in. This was the only system today where management and the rank and file were in the same union. That was one of the things in Bill 160, when we travelled the province of Ontario, that we had to make sure the principals and vice-principals were taken out of the union. I think that had a lot to do with it.

Another thing with the strong leadership of Mike Harris and the Minister of Education is that we've started to make the learning process the best that we possibly can. As a legacy of our government, we can make sure more children have the best opportunity they can possibly have, whether it be in Ontario or anyplace in Canada, to have the best education and make sure they get off to an early start in life, with young people going to junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten — at the start, when we came in, they needed all that. As a government we have seen fit, and the Minister of Education and the Premier have made it clear, that the money will be available to make sure those students are allowed to. We have learned from a long line of experience that the child does learn a lot between the ages of three and six, if we can get them in an environment where they can learn a little bit more and have them better prepared for education and further education.

Those are the kinds of things I heard in this throne speech. I'm only too proud to be part of a government that has been able to make those accomplishments. It's not easy and it is not without some people who are not happy with the way we have changed things. I can tell you, it doesn't matter who makes a change or where it is,

whether it's a small change or a big change: Many people get very upset because there is a change.

As a government, one of the fundamental changes we have made is that we are going to start to pay our bills as we go. We are not going to go further in debt. We're going to continue to put money back into the priorities of education and health and to make sure we have an environment where the economy is strong and can keep on growing. If we don't have a strong economy, it makes very little difference whether we have good education or anything else, because we have to have that person graduating. Regardless of what graduating they do, we must make sure they can graduate and get the job they want and keep that generation going.

We know that over the last few years, in particular over the last four years, we had lost all that kind of hope, and we had lost it in a big-time way. The last government that was in had deteriorated that kind of outlook for a lot of us in Ontario.

It's my pleasure to have spoken on this throne speech today.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?
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Mr Duncan: Let me begin by saying to my colleague from Quinte that the people he has represented have been truly fortunate for the last four years to have him as a member of Parliament and that it's an honour to have served with him. All that being said, we haven't agreed on a whole heck of a lot while we've been here.

Because the member for Quinte began by talking about the government's record on the economy, particularly on the finances of the province, I'd like to address those issues for a minute. What we have is a province with a projected debt this year of about \$112 billion. My understanding is that makes Ontario, when you factor in Ontario Hydro particularly, the largest non-sovereign debtor in the world. In 1995, when they took over, admittedly there was a financial calamity on our hands. There was a large deficit and the government chose to pursue the policies it did. What has it brought? As I understand it — I may be wrong, but I believe Ontario is the second-last province to balance its budget, second last to British Columbia, the Glen Clark government in British Columbia, the gang in British Columbia that's on the third party's side.

I should also like to point out that the province's credit rating, in spite of the Martin-induced boom this country has experienced, has not gone up one notch. What do we have? We have a government that claims to be managing the affairs of the province well, but what it has done is jacked up our debt more than any other government except the NDP, and it has seen no relief on interest because of that. I don't know where they think they get off, but they did it all wrong.

Mr Cullen: I'm pleased to follow on and provide some comments on the member for Quinte's remarks on the speech from the throne. I'm detecting a pattern here of defensiveness. There is this overwhelming compulsion on the government's side to talk about tough decisions

and to defend their record. Instead of looking forward, they're trying to protect what they've done.

It's an interesting view of history because they talk about tough decisions. I just say to myself that people can understand dealing with the deficit, except this is a government that has run four years of deficits. People can understand fighting the deficit if at the end of the day they are going to end up at a better place, but they're discovering that in fighting the deficit this government has taken \$800 million out of health care, \$1 billion out of education, \$400 million out of post-secondary education and \$600 million out of municipalities. In the end, they find that the government has added \$22 billion to the provincial debt, as the member for Windsor-Walkerville has indicated.

What do we have to show for it? Over 40 hospitals closed, hundreds of schools being closed, people on social assistance, the most vulnerable in our community — Mr Speaker, I bet you didn't know that in Ottawa-Carleton for 1995 only 34%, some one third —

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: In this House we cannot call the honourable members liars. I understand that, and that's fair, but if a member in this House lies —

The Acting Speaker: Order. I want you to withdraw this word immediately.

Mr Murdoch: I didn't hear you.

The Acting Speaker: I want you to withdraw the word that you just used; if not, I will ask you to leave.

Mr Murdoch: What word's that? I just asked you a question.

The Acting Speaker: Don't fool around.

Mr Murdoch: I didn't call —

The Acting Speaker: Please, don't fool around. Otherwise, I'll name you.

Mr Murdoch: I would have to go home then, wouldn't I?

The Acting Speaker: If you don't, I will ask you to leave.

Mr Murdoch: Can I ask you just if a person is —

The Acting Speaker: No, withdraw it immediately.

Mr Murdoch: All right, I'll withdraw.

The Acting Speaker: I name you.

Mr Allan K. McLean (Simcoe East): He withdrew, he withdrew.

The Acting Speaker: Please.

Hon David Turnbull (Minister without Portfolio): He withdrew.

The Acting Speaker: I didn't hear it.

Mr McLean: I did.

The Acting Speaker: He did?

Mr Murdoch: I got up on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker: You did?

Mr Murdoch: I said, "All right, I withdraw."

The Acting Speaker: OK, thank you.

Give him back his 30 seconds.

Mr Cullen: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I am focusing on the facts that are on record. When I talk about the provincial debt that has been added by this

government because it has constantly — in fact, the Minister of Finance will show in each of his budgets how much they have added towards the provincial debt. It's a matter of public record. This government is running on a deficit. Quite frankly, if it hadn't been cutting income taxes, it would have had a balanced budget last year and we wouldn't be seeing over 40 hospitals being closed. We wouldn't be seeing over 100 schools being closed by the policies of this government. That's what he should remember.

Mr Bill Grimmitt (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): I'm pleased to make some remarks on the comments made by my colleague the member for Quinte. It certainly has been a delight to hear from the member for Quinte from time to time. During this throne speech debate, we've had an opportunity to hear really a pretty sharp contrast in views on economic theory and on the theory of operating government from the NDP and our own party and of course a total lack of ideas or theories from the Liberal Party, which is something we're used to around here.

I thought the member for Quinte provided a very sincere and also a very passionate view, which would largely come from his background as a small business person. The member for Quinte commented on how the method we have used to reduce the deficit has been measured, how it has been done compassionately and how it has also been done in a way that leads to government having more money to spend on education and health care. That's being demonstrated with our reinvestments in those two areas.

The member talked, again very sincerely, about his own community — there were numerous references to communities in his riding, including Belleville — and how he has heard from his constituents, in terms of the changes we've brought about in health care and in education, that although they recognize they have been difficult, they recognize as well that we had the responsibility to carry out those changes.

It was quite interesting to hear from the member for Quinte after having heard from the member for London Centre because of their obvious difference in views. I thought the member for Quinte provided a real, tangible view on the methods we have used. Also, in contrast to the view from the member for Ottawa West, the member talked a lot about the future. He talked a lot about how our policies are going to lead to a better future for the young people in his riding. I thought the member for Quinte really did a fine job of theorizing on the throne speech.

Mr Gerretsen: I too want to comment on the comments from the member for Quinte. It certainly has been a pleasure serving with him in this House. I was somewhat surprised that he didn't talk about gas prices. I know that one of his claims to fame here is the fact that he is a gas-buster. He and two other of his colleagues were to make sure that the gas prices were kept down. In actual fact, in the Kingston area they've gone up some 10 cents in the last couple of months or so, so I take it that's not one of his success stories.

Let there be no doubt about it that there isn't a member in this House who doesn't want to see his community and the province prosper. That's without question. Let it also be said that all governments — foreign, such as the American government, the federal government, and yes, even some of the measures you've implemented — have led to the growth in the economy in the province of Ontario. There can be no question about it. We're a lot better off as a whole economically than we were in the early 1990s. But it is neither your doing nor the federal government's doing. It is a combination of everything that's working in this country.

Let me also say that up until fairly recently the economic growth that took place in the province of Ontario did not extend further east than Cobourg. In eastern Ontario there are areas where they still haven't seen any of the economic growth he talked about.

Let's just talk about the mismanagement of this government. Can they explain why they fired 10,000 nurses some two years ago and why now they're promising to rehire them? That's what I would like to hear them explain to the people of Ontario.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Quinte, you have two minutes.

Mr Rollins: I'd like to thank the members for Windsor-Walkerville and Ottawa West, my colleague from Muskoka-Georgian Bay and my gas-buster friend from Kingston. I might say to my colleague from Kingston that yes, maybe that's one of the things we haven't been able to accomplish here, but I think you will notice that over the last year particularly the price of gas has quit fluctuating quite so much. That is a proven fact.

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Mr Gerretsen: Just going up, up, up.

Mr Rollins: It went up, John, because when we started out it was at \$11 a barrel and now it's \$17 a barrel, but still the price at the pumps by the week has slowed down quite significantly. The only two weekends that the gas-busters didn't look after the price of gas in Ontario were last Thanksgiving and the first weekend of this year, and both times the oil companies stuck it to us one more time. So I can tell you the gas-busters are going to be up and working real strong and you, the consumers of Ontario, will be benefiting.

The member for Windsor-Walkerville mentioned the debt of Ontario Hydro. I think that under the new restructuring and the new Minister of Energy the plans are that by the year 2014 that debt will be reduced and done away with, but it still takes about 15 years to remove that debt. I think if we as a government had not tackled that problem, and let it go on the way it was, it would have been a lot longer in the life of this country to make sure that Ontario Hydro was going to retire that debt.

I also want to make a comment to the member for Ottawa West, who said something about cutting back welfare. I can tell you, anybody who is working for minimum or low wages should be better off than somebody sitting at home on welfare, and I will continue to say that as long as I have any breath in me.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Duncan: At the outset, I seek unanimous consent to share my time with the member for Scarborough North.

The Acting Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Mr Duncan: I too am pleased, as my colleagues before me, to join the debate on the government's thrown speech.

The throne speech really contained nothing new other than that it did acknowledge that the government just completely let down the disabled community on the issue of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act. They decided not to proceed with their failed bill. I respect their decision to do that and recognize the fallacy of the bill in the first instance.

We look forward to hearing what the government's proposed agenda for the next four years will be. I'd like to talk about issues that I think are important to the people in my riding of Windsor-Walkerville and Windsor-St Clair, speak for a few moments about health care and education and speak about what impact these policies that we discuss on a broad level here have on local communities.

First of all, I think we all have to be reminded that this government has closed one out of every five hospitals in Ontario. That is after promising not to. I'm paraphrasing but I distinctly remember the Premier saying to Robert Fisher in the last leaders' debate, "Robert, it's not our intention to close any hospitals." Now it's one out of every five.

What has that meant for my community? Well, the NDP had actually initiated the hospital closure process in my community. They closed two hospitals, and the government merely followed through on their original plans. The Harris government, like the previous government before it, had no real vision about reinvesting in health care. So we lost two hospitals in Windsor. We had no reinvestment. We had a lot of rhetoric from the previous government, but we saw no dollars. We saw lost revenues. We saw lost beds, not only acute care beds but chronic care beds. We've lost two hospitals.

We've closed one half of our emergency rooms without expanding the remaining two. Instead of four emergency rooms handling a patient volume of roughly 120,000 cases a year, we have two. We didn't put any expansion into it.

I should say that as part of their deathbed repentance this government, when they realized the deep trouble they were in, not only in my community, started making announcements. If we're lucky, we'll see a renovated emergency room at Hotel Dieu Grace that's fully designed to handle the volume of patients it is expected to carry sometime late next year, fully eight years after the process of hospital reconfiguration was begun. What does that mean? It means we've had people on beds in corridors in our emergency rooms; it means we've had seniors, children and others having to wait; it means we've had the so-called code 7s, the redirects. When an

ambulance gets there, they have to be sent somewhere else.

Hospital administrations and people in those hospitals and the government have quite correctly argued that there has been an inappropriate use of certain beds in the hospitals by people who belong in long-term-care facilities. What did we get? We got a promise of more long-term-care beds, again fully seven years after this process began, and two hospitals were closed and the time horizon for actually opening these beds is nowhere in sight. That's what that policy has meant to my community.

The area of cancer care: The government suddenly recognizes the crisis, a crisis that was identified in the case of the Windsor cancer centre in 1994. Again, just prior to the last election the local cabinet minister for that government announced a new cancer centre for Windsor in 1995. Here we are, four years later, and I drove by that centre and met with officials from that centre just last week and we still haven't broken ground. The Windsor cancer centre had identified its problems years ago. So now, even though we'll be one of the last centres, we are faced with the prospect of our citizens going across the river to our neighbours in Detroit to seek radiation treatment within acceptable time limits.

The same can be said in the education field. We can talk about the cuts the government made. We can talk about making permanent the social contract cuts of the previous government, almost half a billion dollars out of our schools. We can talk about a whole range of those sorts of issues. The bottom line from our perspective is that despite improved testing, despite a change in attitude, despite standardized report cards, issues which our party supports and has all along, we're still having difficulty meeting the demands and needs of our young people for the coming millennium.

This government, despite its claims to good management, cut \$1 billion from our education system. They cut special education, adult education and English-as-a-second-language programs. They cut them, and those very programs help improve the productivity of our economy and help allow all of our citizens to participate equally in the prosperity we have enjoyed without any thought here in Ontario.

I predict that tomorrow we'll hear more rhetoric about those things, about what the government is going to invest in those areas. The problem is that it's four years later. The problem is all about mismanagement.

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What I find particularly troubling is that the government has done all of this under the guise of good economic decision-making. They made the tough decisions, is what they've said, and they don't want that prosperity to be threatened. We say they made the wrong decisions. We say they made the wrong decisions in health care. We say that when they cut the money out of our hospitals and failed to reinvest in new community-based services, they made the wrong decision. We say that, like the previous

government, when they cut funding from education they made the wrong decision.

In the case of our economy, our province remains the largest non-sovereign debtor in the world. The credit rating this government receives from independent bond rating agencies is the same as it was the last day the NDP was in office. They will probably be the second-last or last provincial government in this country to balance its budget.

In spite of a booming economy, in spite of our recognized needs and demands in the fields of health care and education, this government has failed to prepare this province for the new millennium. The so-called tough decisions were the wrong decisions. The people of this province won't trust this gang with our hospitals and our schools and our universities and our community colleges again.

The people have seen through the facade. They've seen through the phony \$100-million advertising campaign that frankly, in our view, is neither accurate nor completely straightforward. We look forward to the election. We look forward to changing the tone and the tenor of this province.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): The throne speech is a reminder to the people of Ontario of the damage this Mike Harris government has done by the way they've administered the cuts to programs that have hurt the most vulnerable people in our society. The closures of hospitals have put people's lives at risk, and some people have died in the process.

The throne speech reminds us of the chaos the people of Ontario can depend on. Those who are most vulnerable are looking for affordable housing. This government comes in and brags every day about how good they are. They have attacked the poor and have given to the rich and said, "Look how wonderfully the economy is doing." A responsible government is a democratic government, a government that represents all people and, furthermore, makes sure that the most vulnerable in our society are being protected.

Take, for instance, a topic like education. Look at post-secondary education, the colleges and universities. Tuition fees have increased 60% since this Conservative government, the Mike Harris government, has been in power. What does that tell us? Those who can't afford a post-secondary education will not get one because of the increase in tuition fees. Many people who graduate today have loans higher than the mortgages some of us were holding 15 or 20 years ago, just for an education, for their first degree, and the government continues to brag about how well they have done.

This government has looked on the homeless and ignored them. As a matter of fact, we know that ever since they appointed the Minister of Housing, he has not even answered a question on housing. What he has done is dismantled any program that would have offered affordable housing. This is the government that created the greater chaos we have in homelessness today.

Closing some of those psychiatric hospitals has caused those people to be on the road, nowhere to go. Then they come and wrap themselves around the Anne Golden report and say, "We support that." We haven't seen any money. We have seen the mayor of Toronto try his best to bring attention to the chaos we find today, but we have seen no response from this government, just promises.

Let me comment quickly on one of the things I heard in the throne speech. I think they mentioned the Child and Family Services Act. This is something that really amused me.

As a matter of fact, no. I'd rather comment on early childhood education. I remember that when Dalton McGuinty brought out First Steps and talked about how important it is for young children, kids, to get nutrition and an education, this government was busy cutting junior kindergarten. As a matter of fact, Mike Harris and his gang were saying it was one of the most stupid things they had ever heard. He was actually laughing at that. But he stood in the House and used the Queen's representative to announce the fact that now he thinks it's a sensible thing to do. Why? There's an election. The women in this province have seen that this man has no regard for young people or for children, but he realized it's a good way to get a vote, so today he's embracing that.

Can you trust this man, Mike Harris? Can you trust this government, which at one stage was so brutal to the poor and is now saying how much it wants to embrace and be compassionate, to wrap itself in this compassionate fold? They're now saying, "Give us another five years to finish the job." To finish who? The poor, those who are most vulnerable in our society? To finish those who are on welfare, who had paid their taxes as an insurance so that when times were rough they would be able to get some subsistence? They cut them 22%. I ask them, why don't they cut some of their big buddies' incomes 22% and see how they would squeal? No, they didn't do that.

Who is at the trough? Remember the Leslie Noble situation? She was dipping at one side, consulting here, and then in the meantime advising the Premier. How can you stand in the House today and talk about a compassionate way and about fairness and about dealing with those who are the most vulnerable in our society, when even one within your fold is dipping twice and saying, "That's fine, because when I speak to the Premier, when I work with him, he is the Premier, and when I consult it's a different fold."

This is the government that is asking for another four or five years to go back and talking about how compassionate they are. This is the government which, when people wanted protection for affordable housing and rent control, slashed it completely and said, "Go fend for yourselves with those landlords," who don't care, really. There are some wonderful landlords out there, but some of the most vicious landlords out there are saying, "Here is the time to throw those people out" or to live in this disgraceful situation.

This is the government. Mike Harris is asking for another term to come back, saying, "Give me four more years to do the job, to finish the job." To finish whom?

We said this is the best province, this is the best country. Ask those people on the grille outside, who are dying, who have no place to live, who have no hospital beds to go to. Ask them if this is the best province in the world. They are more concerned about their own lives, which we all should be. The government collects a tremendous amount of tax money. Those people are hoping it will be redistributed in a compassionate manner, with understanding for those who are in need. Do they get it?

This is the government which brags about fiscal responsibility, which has never balanced a budget. I understand that the last time they balanced a budget was in 1970. They promise they are going to balance the budget, but what they have done is that they have borrowed from one place and paid down the deficit, borrowed the money and gave it to their friends — their rich friends; I don't think they have any friends who are poor anyhow. Today we have a debt. They have increased that debt \$23 billion more. A fiscally responsible government, they say. So who will carry the burden? The burden will be carried by our children later on in the 21st century. In the years 2001 and 2002, the people who are coming out of school with the burden of a high student loan will be carrying the debt that this government has created while it says it's a booming economy. Not for those who are carrying those debts.

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They stand here today and say, "How proud we are of what we have done" to those they have done it to. Tomorrow I understand there's a fundraiser. They're bragging about how much money they will roll in. Let me tell them that the intelligence of Ontarians far exceeds their money. When they go to the polls, they'll understand what type of a compassionate government they want. They would want a government with the insight of 20/20 vision; someone who will look beyond two or three or four years and the next election; someone who will say, "In the next 20 years, yes, I will be comfortable, because now we're taking some very responsible fiscal action, an action that will itself spread the wealth."

Yes, it's a wealthy province, but for whom? For the few, for the friends of the Conservatives and Mike Harris's friends, who are not really concerned anyhow. As I said, the Minister of Housing, who never answers questions anyhow about housing because, I presume, there is no housing ministry here — and the arrogance of the Minister of Community and Social Services bragging about how they have reduced the welfare load or the cases because they have kicked them off and said they have forced them to get a job.

I was at a debate the other day. Jack Carroll, whom I'd rather call by his constituency, said that any job is a good job. My golly, he said that people should be taking any job they want. That's the attitude of this government. We'll see them at the polls and we'll make that decision.

The Acting Speaker: Questions or comments?

Mrs Boyd: I'm happy to have an opportunity to comment on the speeches by both the member for Windsor-Walkerville and the member for Scarborough North.

I'd like to refer first to some of the comments from the member for Windsor-Walkerville because he, like the former Minister of Health, the member for Simcoe West, appeared to be blaming the previous NDP government for the fact that although we had announced the plans to go ahead with the cancer centre, somehow we hadn't been able to carry through on that. I would like him to remember that was the result of an election that elected this government, which didn't go through with funding not only the cancer centre in Windsor but also the cancer centre in Durham and the cancer centre in Mississauga.

What is more, it's the government that went back on the agreement that the community of Windsor had with the NDP government that if they went ahead voluntarily with the restructuring of their hospital, they would be the recipients of the dollars to make the changes that had to be made, because they had been very clear, as have most communities, about what needed to happen if that hospital restructuring were going to be reality.

The member is quite right. It is only in these last few weeks where the Tory government has begun to realize the effect of not flowing the funds to those hospitals that have worked so hard in communities that are out in front in terms of hospital restructuring, that their mistake in not flowing the money to the emergency situation in Windsor is a very serious error. It has been clear for months and months that unless that money was flowed to Windsor, they couldn't possibly deal with the needs of health care in that community. The member is right that this government is responsible for that.

Mr W. Leo Jordan (Lanark-Renfrew): It gives me great pleasure this evening to have a few minutes to comment on the points put forward by the member for Scarborough North. When I think about the member for Scarborough North, two things come to mind: what a nice individual and friendly person he is. But then I think back to 1995 and Bill 26. I cannot get it out of my mind that he would take such a stand here in the Legislature. I was just looking at the front page of the Sun the other day. It had the picture there — I'm sure the member is well aware of it — of all the Liberals and the NDP standing in a group around the member for Scarborough North, saying, "How strong we are, how we shall not" —

Interjections.

Mr Jordan: No. You call it what you're like. If you people were present, if you people even understood what this government accepted when they took power — let me just let you think about it for a minute. We're spending a lot of time talking about the things we've done since we took power, but no one is talking about the conditions under which we had to accept power. Think about that. We were facing bankruptcy; there were two sets of books, one set saying there was a surplus — and his government did the same thing to the NDP government. They told the NDP government they had a surplus.

Peterson said, "There's a surplus." He went across the country and told the people that.

Mr Gerretsen: If the member from Lanark believes that in 1995 the provincial coffers were bankrupt, we're even more bankrupt now, because then the total debt of this province was \$88 billion; now it's \$112 billion. You have added on to the public debt of this province. About \$10 billion of that was to pay for a tax cut. In other words, your actions have added to the public debt of this province.

The other thing I found very interesting was his comment with respect to Bill 26. That was the bully-bill, known throughout the province as the bill in which everyone —

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Direct your comments and questions towards the members who spoke.

Mr Gerretsen: My comments and questions are towards what the members for Windsor-Walkerville and Scarborough North were talking about. Excellent speeches they gave. They gave perfect summations as to what this government is all about, and this government is all about bullying people. It bullied the people on welfare; it bullied the teachers; it bullied the nurses; it bullied every group out there. All the groups lost, with the exception of one group, and that was the doctors. They won. That's the only group that you cowered to and you gave them what they wanted.

If he wants to talk about Bill 26, a bill that is still remembered by many people across this province as the bill that did more against democracy in this province than anything else — because a lot of the other things that have happened in this province since then from a public policy viewpoint all go back to —

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): I want to comment on the speeches of the members for Windsor-Walkerville and Scarborough North, to say that I agree with almost all of what they have to say, particularly the member for Scarborough North. I'm always amazed when the member for Scarborough North speaks here, because I have this feeling inside that he should actually be a New Democrat. You should be over here; you really should. Some of the things you say — I tell you, it takes a lot of courage in the political environment we live in today —

Mr Gerretsen: He wants to be a winner.

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Mr Martin: Do you want to be a winner, or do you want to be right? I think that's often the question we need to ask ourselves here, for integrity's sake.

To the member for Scarborough North, it takes a lot of courage, in the political environment we're in today, to speak up on behalf of the poor; it really does. Because this government and their ilk, their supporters and benefactors, have poisoned the environment so much around the question of the poor and fighting poverty and poverty

issues that any politician who wants to strictly play by the rules of winning — which is what the member for Kingston said a few minutes ago — and is not concerned at all about the question of integrity is not going to speak about these things.

When you consider the agenda of this government and the fact that they've targeted consistently, from day one, groups of people across this province who are vulnerable or marginalized or in some way seen by the general public as perhaps not quite in the in crowd — and then they have a go at them for nothing other but political expediency, for political purposes, you begin to understand what drives this government.

There was nothing in the speech from the throne the other day that spoke to any vision or plan that will affect the ordinary working man and woman or family in this province in any way at all.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Windsor-Walkerville has two minutes to respond.

Mr Duncan: I want to address the comments of the members of the third party and then the government. First of all, when I hear a New Democrat talk about integrity, I remember public auto insurance; I remember the social contract. In the 1990 campaign the New Democrats said they would pay for their campaign promises by taxing the rich. What did they do? They taxed everybody. This was the party of organized labour that opened up and stripped collective agreements. So when we hear "integrity" coming from over there, let's just remember what happened between 1990 and 1995, a time they're going to try to forget but that we won't forget. We won't let them forget it as we move forward into the general election.

I want to address for a moment the comments of the government members who spoke to our speech and say that, first of all, health care and education have been mismanaged and your level of incompetence in those two issues will precede you into the election. The people of this province don't think you made the tough decisions; they think you made the wrong decisions. Those wrong decisions have been catalogued. They've been catalogued in people in waiting rooms; they have been catalogued by kids not having access to good-quality public education.

This government, which likes to trumpet its record as a good financial manager, is the government that took this province's debt up yet another \$22 billion to \$23 billion. This government, that likes to tout its record as a financial manager, is the second-last province in this great country to balance its budget. This government had money for a tax cut at a time when that money could have been used to reduce the debt, restore health care and restore education. You had your priorities wrong. That's why the people won't trust you in health care; they won't trust you in education. You didn't make the tough decisions; you made the wrong decisions.

The Deputy Speaker: I wanted to draw the attention of the House to a visiting group of young people from Scarborough Centre. I want to point out to you the First

Cliffcrest Beavers, their parents and leaders. Welcome to our Legislature.

I recognize the member for Ottawa East.

Mr Cullen: It's Ottawa West, Mr Speaker.

I'm pleased to participate in this debate on the speech from the throne. To our young friends there, we're really talking about the government's agenda for the next couple of weeks, maybe, if we're lucky. This is supposed to be the legislative agenda for the third session of the 36th Parliament, yet as I go through it, and it's clear from the commentary that we have, it's kind of like the end of school. The kids in the gallery will recognize that. You know, towards the end of June kids are impatient, they smell summer coming, vacation time coming, and they want to get out of the building. I detect around here that there are a lot of members who would like to get out of the building because they want to go knocking on doors and campaigning for re-election. That's all well and good, but unfortunately the speech from the throne is nothing to campaign on.

I look at the speech from the throne and I see six bills, three of which are recycled from the previous session. Of these bills that are being recycled, one assuredly will pass — the Child and Family Services Act — but the other ones, given this government's own inclination to pull the trigger within two weeks, are not likely to see swift passage in this House. The other three bills are interesting as well. Some of them, of course, we will support, and others, again, are just there for show.

What are members in this House doing when they talk about the speech from the throne? The government side is very intent on defending the government's record, because they know that this is the opportunity, to talk to us but more importantly to talk to those people who are watching, and they want to hone their campaign speeches.

As the member for London Centre said, in conjunction with all the government advertising, it is to tell the public that everything is all right in Mike Harris's Ontario. Well, everything is not all right in Mike Harris's Ontario and therein lies the rub. The reason everything is not all right in Mike Harris's Ontario is the one very fundamental part of the Common Sense Revolution, that keystone of the Common Sense Revolution, which is the income tax cut.

In my community, if you earn \$30,000 a year, the income tax cut is worth two cups of coffee a week; maybe not insignificant, but people in my community can see first-hand the impact, the cost of that income tax cut. Walk down the streets — Georgina or Warrington or Parkview — and these are single-family homes. These are people most of whom are earning more than \$80,000 a year, but they're quite upset that their neighbourhood school, which does not have one vacant room, is being closed. It is a successful, viable community school. I know it well. It's merely blocks away from where I live. This school is being closed because of the government's school accommodation formula, which radically rewrites the whole definition of the use of schools. Not only does

the community lose its school and the child care centre is lost, but the very place where Beavers and Cubs and Girl Guides go is lost to the community.

The city of Ottawa, the city of Nepean for its schools, the city of Gloucester for its schools, the city of Cumberland because we now have a city of Cumberland, and Kanata and all the other communities are saying: "Wait a second. This school accommodation formula which flows from Bill 160 has got nothing to do with education; it has got everything to do with taking money out of our community. We don't want to lose these community facilities. We don't want to lose these things that make communities real communities."

In my community of Ottawa West, whether it's in the White Haven community or down at Crystal Beach, Crystal Bay and Lakeview, which is now in the member for Nepean's community but will soon be in my community as I go knocking on doors, they don't want to lose these facilities.

Let me tell you more about what people will be saying about this keystone in the Common Sense Revolution, this income tax cut. I was at Trinity United Church all of two nights ago, up on Maitland, in front of 40 people whose average age, I have to tell you, would have to be 60-plus. These are active seniors. They are there, these 40 people. They're part of a group called Church in Society, of the United Church. They're talking about health care.

We could all talk about what's happened with the cuts to health care, the \$800 million that came out, the laying off of over 10,000 nurses, and now the money coming from the federal government being passed through, because that was the deal, not because Mike Harris thought this was a good thing. After all, he was the man who stood up and said: "Well, these nurses go. It's like Hula Hoops. They have their time and place." That's what he said, which I thought was rather unique. I grew up in the Hula Hoop era but I thought nurses were very important to our health care system.

These people see the ads on TV and they're not taken in, because they live the real life experience. You come out of hospital after having a stroke or a heart attack, where you're covered for 24-hour-a-day care and your medication is all paid for, and you land with a thump in the home care system which is capped at 15 hours a week. If you need 30 hours or 25 hours of care because you just came out of the hospital, it's not there. You have to either rely on family and friends or pay for it out of your pocket at \$18 an hour. Of course you have to pay for your medication on top of that.

These people are saying: "Wait a second. What happened to our health care system, our medicare system? Why is it we don't have a seamless structure here?"

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I can recall when the hospitals, after having had this money cut by the Harris government, were passing people out sicker and quicker, as fast as they could because they couldn't afford to hang on to hospital patients. It overloaded the home care system. Our community care

access centre found itself, in December, three months away from the end of its fiscal year, coming to the provincial government and asking for \$3 million. Not only could it not handle the waiting list for physiotherapy and for visiting nurses and all the other services, but it couldn't handle the onslaught coming out of hospital. So they told people that for three weeks over the Christmas season — 75%; that's 11,000 people, so we're talking of nearly 8,000 people on home care in Ottawa-Carleton — "You'll have to rely on family and friends, because we can't afford to give you 15 hours maximum a week."

No wonder the community went up in flames. The cancer society because their membership access home care, the Kidney Foundation, the liver society, heart and stroke, over 70 groups — seniors' groups, health care groups, all the foundations, the charitable organizations — whose members use the home care system certainly got themselves on the phone, because they understood who had the finger on the button.

We did get some funding, but the funding we're getting courtesy of the federal government flowing through, because of the mistake it made, even the money going through there only begins to repair the damage Mike Harris did to our health care system in 1995-96. The \$800 million going out is \$2 billion in today's dollars, and that's not the amount of money that's coming from the feds.

What happens to the need for home care, the need for palliative care, the need for long-term care? Even the government's announcement of 20,000 new beds being accelerated won't put a dent in the waiting list, because we have to play catch-up and we have an aging population who have health care needs that will not be met by this government.

Why do we find ourselves in this situation? Because of the keystone of the Common Sense Revolution, that income tax cut.

My community is a middle-class community. Yes, we have social housing in our community. Yes, we have people who are on welfare, and I want to come back to that because that is the saddest story of the Common Sense Revolution.

I want to come back to these people who came out on Monday night to Trinity United Church, these folks who own their own single-family homes on large lots, who have paid their taxes, built their homes and raised their families. Their families have flown the coup and they're in their retirement years, and they're coming out because they are very concerned about the trend towards a two-tier system and the trend towards Americanization of our health care system, and they don't like it.

They remember well what happened in the 1950s when Ontario, under a Tory government, resisted medicare. They remember what happened in the mid-1960s when medicare finally came in and they were told that this would be a public health care system that would be accessible to every Canadian, no matter who they were or where they lived. It would be affordable, it would be public.

What has happened since Mike Harris took power? Not only do we see the cuts to our emergency rooms, the overcrowding in emergency rooms, the increase in pharmaceutical costs with the user fees, over \$230 million of additional user fees for drug costs, the Trillium plan, but now we see the government in an inadequate position to meet the needs for home care. Why? Because its first duty was to cut income taxes.

As I said earlier, for someone earning \$30,000 a year it's two cups of coffee a week. But the first priority of this government was to cut income taxes. Never mind that it carried on running a deficit year after year after year. Never mind that it added \$22 billion to the provincial debt, and \$10 billion of that was as a direct result of this income tax cut. We know now that had income taxes not been cut, in fiscal year 1998-99 we would be in a balanced budget situation. That's last fiscal year. We would have been in a balanced budget situation, without having to close hospitals.

In my community, closing hospitals means the downsizing of the Civic, the downsizing of the Elisabeth Bruyère, the closure of the Riverside, the closure of the Grace, the downsizing of the Montfort. In the west end particularly, it means the downsizing of the Ottawa Civic Hospital and the closure of the Grace.

These people who live in my community, who raise their families in my community and who have seen me at their doorstep, whether I was on school board, city council or regional council, and now as their member of provincial Parliament — and I should say that they will soon be receiving my householder telling them about the work I do here in their mailboxes — these people know you have to pay for these services from taxes, and what they see in terms of their benefits as opposed to the costs in terms of health care, there's no argument. Indeed, that is why in September 1997 the people in Ottawa West rejected the Tory candidate overwhelmingly and elected me at 53%.

Interjection: They elected a Liberal.

Mr Cullen: I want to speak to the notion of whether or not the Liberals have a policy or a program that can address the crisis in health care that has been caused by this keystone in the Harris government's revolution, which is the cut to income tax.

I have to tell you that I was at an NDP nomination meeting in Ottawa South, and I said to the assembled throng there that the key message they should bring out in that community is, "Don't waste your vote on a Liberal."

Mr Baird: Hear, hear.

Mr Cullen: The reason why I say that is quite clear. If you have difficulty with the Harris agenda, the cost to health care, the cost to community services, the cost to education as a result of this income tax cut, you cannot campaign to repair that damage without addressing the keystone of the Common Sense Revolution. If you're not prepared to roll back some portion of that income tax cut, you will not have the money to deal with health care, education, all the other things.

The Liberals talk a good game: They don't like that income tax cut; they don't like the cuts to health care; they don't like the cuts to education; they don't like the cuts to community services. But without rolling back that income tax cut, they have no money. They cannot spend twice what this government is already spending in terms of federal transfers. They cannot spend it twice. It is already being spent.

I belong to a party which, I'm quite pleased to say, is going to do something about this keystone that has generated all this damage to our community services, to our health care, to our education. That is, quite simply, the New Democratic program, which will roll back the income tax cut for the top 6% of the population, those individuals with taxable incomes of \$80,000 or more.

When I was at Trinity United Church and my seniors were there and they heard me speaking, how many of them —

The Deputy Speaker: It may be all right at that church to flash that, but it's not here. No props.

Mr Cullen: I have here the speech from the throne, and I'm sure I'm referring to the speech from the throne in all of these things.

Interjections.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I don't mind you reading in front of me. I don't care to be corrected when I'm suggesting that it's a prop. I won't have it.

Mr Cullen: My apologies, Mr Speaker, but I do intend to quote from it. Thank you.

When I mentioned earlier that the centre point of our campaign is to roll back the income tax cut for those with taxable incomes of \$80,000 or more, we have a place to put that money. It will generate \$1.5 billion, and it will go back into health care, it will go back into education and it will go back into community services. We know where the money is coming from. It's a balanced-budget approach, not adding one cent to the deficit.

When I talk to my community about home care and they hear from us that we're going to invest \$250 million immediately into home nursing, homemaking and personal support services so that people can live independently and with dignity in their own homes for as long as possible, and when I tell them we're going to stop the bidding war for home care contracts, which leads to unrealistically low bids, low wages for health care workers and poor service, that health care funding should go into patient care, not for profit, people in my community recognize that. They understand that you can't get something for nothing, and they understand that these monies have to go there because our own health care restructuring commission says that these are the priorities, long-term care, palliative care, home care.

2020

One thing I did want to return to is the issue of what this Mike Harris government has done to the poorest in our community. I'm reminded of this because — and again, I don't intend to use this as a prop, but I intend to quote from it. This is the report on homelessness that

came from regional government to our community services committee.

The report on homelessness makes some rather remarkable statements on Ottawa-Carleton. People think Ottawa-Carleton is fat-cat city, but they don't know the extent of homelessness in our community. Last year 5,000 people were without shelter in our community, over 900 of whom were kids, not street kids but children.

What is interesting to find from this, and disturbing to me, is that prior to 1995, 34% of those people receiving social assistance were paying more than their shelter allowance towards their rent, which means that over a third of these people had to take from their food money, their health money, money that's needed for their children, to help pay the rent. That is deplorable, to find that one out of three would find themselves in that situation.

However, after the cut to welfare rates which was imposed by this Harris government as part of financing an income tax cut where one quarter of the benefit goes to the top 6% of the population, people earning over \$80,000 a year or more, 86% of those on social assistance found themselves paying more than their shelter allowance on their rent. That means four out of five people had to take from their food money, their health money, money for their future, money for their kids, to help pay the rent. No wonder we have a homelessness problem, because you've got to eat to live, and if you can't pay the rent, then on the street you go.

So we have these 5,000 people, families, living in shelters. The primary reason they were there five years ago was marital breakup; today it's eviction, because they cannot afford to pay the rent.

Shame on this government for putting ahead of the needy in our community an income tax cut which benefits mostly the wealthy in our community. Some 25% of the benefit of this income tax cut goes to 6% of the population, those individuals earning \$80,000 or more. That is why when I go door to door in my community, in the well-to-do communities in Ottawa West —

Mr Baird: And in my community.

Mr Cullen: — and indeed in some parts of Nepean, people tell me to solve homelessness, to ensure that there's adequate home care, to make sure that the schools remain in our community, whether it's St Thomas School in Crystal Beach, Crystal Bay, whether it's White Haven school in White Haven, whether it's Queensway school in Queensway Terrace North. It is worth it for me to pay a little more in tax, to go back to 1995, to maintain the quality of life that we have become accustomed to in Ontario. That will be the election issue.

Mr Baird: I always enjoy listening to a speech by the member for Ottawa West. The member for Ottawa West and I may disagree, but at least we take difficult but necessary stands on issues, which is so different from our friends in the official opposition.

I did find one part of the member's speech to be remarkably interesting, his comments with respect to a speech he gave to the Ottawa South New Democratic riding association. He said, "Don't waste your votes on

the Liberal Party." Never have I heard such wise words in this House as that comment. It's tremendously good advice, not just to people in Ottawa South but to people in Nepean-Carleton as well, and I'll be sure to pass on that advice on a day-to-day basis.

Where the honourable member and I disagree is on how you deal with the challenges facing our society. Like he, I'm concerned about the issue of homelessness in our province, whether it's in an urban area, a rural area or suburban Ontario. But the best way we deal with those is perhaps where the road becomes forked. I believe you've got to grow the economy, that if you can create an environment where the private sector will create jobs, that is the best thing we can do. The best social program for someone is a job.

I'm concerned that not enough jobs have been created. But 540,000 net new jobs is an excellent start, and it has happened because we've had strong and effective leadership. We can't put all that at risk by a risky scheme put forward by the Liberal Party or the strategy that he has put forth.

I encourage him, though, to talk about his economic philosophies with respect to taxation when he visits CentrepoinTE in my riding, when he visits Qualicum and Graham Park in my riding. I hope he tells those people in those homes that he thinks they're not taxed enough and he'd like to take a \$1.5-billion tax grab. The wrong way.

Mr Gerretsen: I found it very interesting to listen to the member for Ottawa West. I wonder if in 1997, when he ran in that by-election, he was telling people exactly the same thing. Was he telling people at that point in time, "Don't waste your vote but just vote for me"? In this House we never quite know whether he's reading from the Liberal talking points or from the NDP talking points. Some people would suggest that maybe they shouldn't be wasting their vote on the NDP in the coming election, but that of course remains to be seen. It all depends on how badly the people of Ontario want to get rid of the Harris reactionary government that we've had over the last four years in this province.

He made some reference to the fact that we have not costed out the promises we've made in our 20/20 Plan, Mr Speaker. Let me make it absolutely clear to you and to the people of Ontario that we have costed out every last penny of the \$2.5 billion that we are going to reinvest in health care and education, and it's from the existing budget. It is not taking into account at all any revenue growth. It will be part of the 20/20 Plan that will be available to each and every Ontarian within the next week or so, so that people can make up their own minds whether or not the fiscal promises that we've made in that plan make any sense. I'm telling you, every last penny of it has been costed out, even down to items where we feel \$2 million to \$4 million to \$5 million can be found in different budgets that currently exist within the provincial budgetary documents.

Mr Martin: It is my privilege tonight to rise, if only for a short time, to comment on the —

Mr William Saunderson (Eglinton): That's good.

Mr Martin: That's typical of the member across the way. First they don't listen, and then when they actually do wake up to the fact that somebody is speaking, they have nothing else to say except to be rude or curt or dismissive. That's what we've come to expect from you over the last four years: dismissive and arrogant and rude. Those are the words that describe you most in my experience and my view here in this House.

The member for Ottawa West is somebody people in this House and across this province would do well to listen to. He's a person who comes to this job with some long experience in working on behalf of his community in the areas of health care and education, questions of social justice. We in this caucus have been enriched by his moving over and his contribution and his presence. He speaks again today in the same way that he has spoken consistently over the last couple of years that I've known him in this place, and from the people who knew him when he was a councillor in the area of Ottawa, he has been consistent in his very excellent analysis of the economics of things and the impact they have on the lives of families and individuals in his community.

He speaks here tonight about the province and the impact of the policies of this government. With the smoke-and-mirrors exercise we're going through at the moment with the speech from the throne, and I suggest the budget next week, you will again begin to believe and to see that what he's saying is in fact the truth.

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired. Comments and questions?

2030

Mr Galt: I thoroughly enjoyed the presentation by the member for Ottawa West, but what was even more entertaining was the member for Kingston and The Islands, the king of flip-flop for the Liberals, criticizing somebody in the NDP for flip-flopping. The irony is just absolutely unreal.

This 20/20 Plan, as I've heard it referred to, that the Liberals have brought out is a 20% increase in taxes and \$20 billion more in debt. That's where we're going to end up with their 20/20 Plan. The vision is absolutely phenomenal. I can just see where it's going. You really don't lay out what it's going to cost. You talk about your energy plan. You talk about how it's going to equal the cost of a cup of coffee and a doughnut. In fact the conversion of the Ontario Hydro plants is going to amount to over \$6 billion, and you people have the nerve to refer to that as a cup of coffee and a doughnut. That's the kind of exaggeration you're going through.

At least with the NDP we know where they're at. They're honest. They lay out the plan. It's another \$1.5 billion they're going to take from the rich, and they admit to that. They tell us where they're going to get it, but with the Liberals you just never know what they're going to say today and what they're going to say tomorrow.

Interjection: It's smoke and mirrors.

Mr Galt: It's smoke and mirrors and they just keep changing it.

It's interesting to hear the member for Ottawa West talk about hard-hearted government. In fact, what this very compassionate government has been doing is establishing an economy so we have some dollars to spend on things like health care, which is very important to your party as well as to our party; so we have some dollars from a strong economy to spend on quality education. Those are the kinds of things that you can do with good leadership once you get a good economy going.

Mr Baird: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: Based on the speech by my colleague the member for Northumberland, I'd like to ask for unanimous consent for the member for Kingston and The Islands to detail to the House how he will find \$7 million to \$8 million of cuts from the Legislative Assembly, as promised in their 20/20 Plan. Maybe he could table that with the Clerk.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it agreed? It is not agreed.

The Chair recognizes the member for Ottawa West.

Mr Cullen: I know that the member for Kingston and The Islands owes me one.

I am pleased to respond to the comments by the members for Nepean, Kingston and The Islands, Sault Ste Marie and Northumberland.

I have to go back to the crux of my argument, which is that the cuts to income taxes have generated all the cuts to community services, health care and education, to pay for an income tax cut which only benefits mostly people who are very well off. Most people understand that if you're earning over \$80,000 as an individual, that's your taxable income every year, how much more help do you really need? Yet we just look at the reality, and this is a credibility gap that the government has.

The government firmly believes that this income tax cut has solved all kinds of ills. It is so out of touch with reality that it doesn't understand the ills it has created. When they lose, as they have, the community of White Haven because of their policies, they have to recognize that there's a problem here. When they lose, as they have lost, the community in Crystal Beach-Lakeview, then they have to begin to realize that talking about 540,000 jobs, which is still less than what they promised in their Common Sense Revolution, is not cutting it.

I'll use the example of Nortel, which is expanding in terms of jobs. The member opposite will crow about that, but they're having problems attracting people to the neighbouring communities because the health care is not there, never mind for themselves but for their parents, and because you're closing schools there to pay for an income tax cut. People are saying: "I pay taxes and I expect service. If the service is not there, why are you giving me back money? I want those services." The proof is in the pudding. That's the issue in this election.

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): It's my privilege to be the third speaker in rotation for remarks on the speech from the throne. At the outset I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the people of Ontario, in fact the people of Durham East, for the privilege of serving them in this particular session, the 36th Parliament of Ontario.

As I was looking at the speech from the throne, I hearkened to the remarks of the Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable Hilary Weston. I'm going to try and talk about not just the throne speech but how it applies to my riding of Durham East. I'm quoting the Lieutenant Governor and this is what she said in the speech from the throne, "All in Ontario have worked hard." Certainly my constituents have worked hard. We've all been part of resolving a situation where Ontario was spending way beyond its means, with an \$11 billion deficit. This is what she said:

"All in Ontario have worked hard — taxpayers, families, employees, small business owners and government. The people of this province have made great progress to get our house in order after years of neglect. While more work remains, people have said the province is on the right track."

I agree with those remarks. It has been challenging for all the people of Ontario and respectfully I say thanks, not in an arrogant way but I think that whenever you redress a situation that's out of control, it's difficult and it's a shared responsibility. I've always said it really starts with each individual recognizing that they're part of the solution or they're part of the problem.

Out of respect for my constituents, I took some time to reflect this afternoon, because I was asked to speak, on the important sectors, and these aren't in any particular order but I want to mention the people, the real names, the faces, the things that have made a difference over the last four years of my privilege of serving the riding of Durham East.

I start with the most important sector. The most important sector, perhaps, arguably, is the agricultural sector. This afternoon I was privileged to be invited to meet with the Farmers of Ontario, a very important group. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs addressed the group, and they spoke to him directly about their plan for the new century in Ontario. They were confident, they were there, and they were received in confidence.

I'd like to recognize Mr Ed Segworth of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, and Bob Dow of the corn producers. I might add that Anna Bragg, the new president of the Ontario Corn Producers' Association is from my riding, in fact she lives just down the road from where I live. It really drives it home. This is about the people of Ontario, of which I'm one, with the privilege to serve here. There's Wayne Newman from the Ontario Agricultural Commodity Council, Peter Oosteroff, who's a dairy farmer of Ontario, and many more.

It would suffice to say that the agricultural sector in our economy is \$7 billion, farm gate receipts, and the ripple effect goes throughout our economy.

Recently in my riding I met with Russell Dow and watched the lambing operation just a few weeks ago at his farm; he's a former director in that sector.

I attended all the meetings this past winter with the Durham Region Federation of Agriculture and Victoria county and listened to the producer groups and their concerns — the biotechnology issues, the heavy capital

investment to be competitive in this global economy, a very misunderstood sector that's unappreciated.

Now when I have a boiled egg for breakfast I really think of the egg producers in my riding. It's something that the people of Ontario have to realize, that that sector, whether it's the pork producers or the grain or the apple producers, they have all shared in this recovery of Ontario. The job's not done. Clearly we're there to try and support that sector.

I've also met with the cattlemen's association and the soil crop. Of course I would be remiss not to mention that in the soil crop, the Atlantic packaging and the bio-solids on the land is an important, on-going issue. I keep the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Norm Sterling, posted and let him know that I'm interested on behalf of my constituents, that we have to maintain the quality of our resource: the land and the very food that's produced from it.

That's my first remark respectfully to my constituents with the agricultural sector.

I automatically gravitate to the many organizations I've had the privilege to speak to over the past four or five months: the Kinettes and the Kinsmen, the Lions Club, the Rotary Club. At each of them I look out and see people familiar to me from my time as a councillor and just as a citizen in the community watching these people volunteering in our community.

2040

Marilyn Mushinski, as the parliamentary assistant to the Premier, was giving out awards in Scarborough, and she thought I'd sort of monopolized the volunteer recognition night, which was a week or so ago, I had so many of my constituents. It's sort of a rural part of Ontario although we're in the GTA — that's a debate for another day — but volunteerism comes quite naturally with communities that are knit together over time. There were members from the hospital board, the Lions Club, the visual arts centre, Big Brothers, and they were all recognized and thanked by Marilyn Mushinski and myself that night in Scarborough.

I thank them personally here tonight, because they're part of the solution of not expecting us to tax more to solve every problem in Ontario. That may become an important part of the debate over the next few weeks if there's an election but, ongoing, our solution has always been to look at every possible option of delivery of high-quality service without increasing taxes.

The highlight of that whole event of recognizing of volunteerism in Ontario and in my riding — it's impossible to select one recipient, but there was one person, Gwenyth Thompson from Port Perry, who worked for a long time in the hospital sector as a volunteer, and she was recognized by Lieutenant Governor Hilary Weston at Hart House. It was a real honour for me to be there, not prestigiously, but to thank her on behalf of my constituents. Volunteers, whether it's the 4-H Club or all the way up to one of the Rotary service clubs, are part of the community, and they are the people whom I try to represent.

Arguably there are those out there who think every time I meet with them there's always got to be more money to solve every problem. I wish there were more money, but when I think of that I always think of my family, your family and those people in my community who are perhaps on a fixed income. They can simply not afford continually rising taxes. That sounds like a very tired debate, but we have to reinvent ourselves and how we do things.

Orono, Newcastle, Burketon, Blackstock, Port Perry, Bowmanville, Curtis, all of those communities, are made up of many small businesses. There are no large corporate partners there. It's mainly made up of small businesses. I try to attend on a regular basis the meetings, whether it's with the chamber of commerce or with the Clarington Business Group or whether it's the newly formed board of trade.

In going to those meetings, I meet all sorts of partners, whether they are people in home-based businesses, which is an expanding sector, people starting up a small financial consulting business, real estate agents — the list goes on. What I've done with them is I've watched and listened, and I had a consultation on budget input. It was arranged by Ron Collis and the Clarington Business Group. We met in the school. A number of people attended. We just received their observations. Some may have characterized them as criticism, but those observations by those real people operating small businesses were submitted to Ernie Eves as part of the budget consideration.

Some of the members aren't perhaps paying as close attention as they should to the detail of this particular comment, and I wish they would. Mr Leach, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, is here and I appreciate that he's nodding his head. He agrees with me, I believe. Overwhelmingly, I heard favour for a sales tax reduction. If we were to have a reduction in provincial sales tax, hopefully the federal government would get the signal. That will affect every consumer at every income level, with obviously more favour to the people with the smaller income because more of their income is disposable income. That's on the record; that's here.

I want to thank the board of trade, Michael Patrick and Adrian Foster, who are arranging a post-budget breakfast meeting with a local accountant, a CA, Peter Hobb, who will comment very objectively on the budget. Working with small business, whether it's the Scugog Chamber of Commerce — Yvonne Pepper and Brian Callery — it's extremely important for me to listen, not to editorialize on their important observations.

If I look at the bigger picture in Ontario, small business creates jobs. We've heard that over and over again. When I think of jobs, and I think of my family — I have three children in university coming home this summer, Andrew, Marnie and Rochelle — they'll be three of the many university and college students looking for summer employment, so I look at the Ontario summer jobs strategy and the plan of our Ministry of Education and all the ministries working together to create opportunities. It's

anticipated there will be over 53,000 new jobs for young people who are home from their education. That's more than twice the number of those that were found through the jobs strategy in 1995. Last year the summer jobs strategy surpassed the expectations. I hope it does it again this year. It's for the youth and part of small business. We have to create opportunities for young people or work with the sector to create those opportunities.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge the importance of education and to hear in public in this forum and with respect to the throne speech that most teachers are hard-working, dedicated professionals. There are a few in the union movement who have spoiled it not just for the classroom teacher, but arguably for many of the students. That is very difficult for me, as my wife is a teacher and I know the stress that has been created.

I hosted a forum on the three Rs: rights, responsibilities and respect in the classroom. It was organized by my legislative intern. They had a reception here tonight. Gord Westmacott organized the whole thing, a very professional young man who has a very imminently bright future. I just wish that I had an important enough position to have him as one of my staff members, but I'm sure with his undergraduate degree in journalism and his graduate degree that he's working on, he'll be scooped up by any one of the parties. His research skills are excellent, as are his journalism and communication skills. He set that meeting up he had the principal of the high school, Fred Mandryk, and the community policing officer from the Durham regional police, Staff Sgt Ted Dionne, and Constable Paul Hawrychuk. He also invited Donna Lucas-Astley, who is a member of a school community council but also a member of the Ontario Parent Council.

He also had Greg Koenderman, an OAC student and former president of the Bowmanville school council; and Ron Hooper, who's the president of the Bowmanville Business Improvement Area. He invited Toni Skarica, who's the MPP for Wentworth North and also a member of the crime commission, but a former parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education. So we had a panel. I was rather subordinated in this role. We were listening to teachers, parents, educators and students, a cross-section of the community. We summarized their observations on rights and responsibilities of students, teachers and parents, a very balanced discussion that night. I thank the people who participated.

Once again I drive it back to our reforms or changes that have affected every single family and every individual, but we have listened and certainly I have listened. Those comments were unedited, fed to the minister and I expect that the discussion was well heard.

I also have attended a number of new school openings in my riding. I think there are up to 12 new schools in Durham, where we had an inordinate number of portables throughout the area, a rapidly growing area. I attended the opening of St Leo's School in Brooklin and met with — very amicably, I might add — the principal, Jeananne Ralph; the mayor; and Jim Flaherty, the Minister of Labour who's taking over that part of my riding in

the next election, a very joyful, hopeful event, a wonderful, beautiful school with great teachers and students and support in the community.

I also expect to attend the opening of another new school, St Elizabeth, in Bowmanville, where by the way my wife is a teacher. It will be a real privilege to be in public office and to be there at the official opening of a brand-new elementary school, very much needed in the area.

2050

There's also a new secondary school in my riding just down the street from where I live, St Stephen's secondary, a wonderful school, open access to children from all over the community. In the last few weeks, with the few times I've had the opportunity to speak to people at coffee parties and people who have invited me into their homes to meet with neighbours and small business people, I've heard about health. I tell them that we are spending more money in health. There's no one here who can dispute the absolute accuracy of their public accounts record. Year over year we have spent more money in health care; arguably we have spent it differently.

People in my riding watch the CBC news or the CFTO news; they read the Toronto Star; they hear about all the calamity that's going on in Toronto. But the reality is this: In Durham region for the last couple of decades we've experienced enormous growth in what is probably one of the lowest-funded areas in the province, not just for hospitals but children's aid societies; for education and for community-based services.

I tell them Toronto is angry because we're moving cancer treatment and dialysis and other high-level services from Toronto to Durham. There are 500,000 people in Durham. Now we're bringing services closer to patients. Naturally, the 1,600 people and their families who have to travel to Princess Margaret are now going to have their services closer here in Durham. I thank Elizabeth Witmer for her work — and a very difficult challenge. I thank my constituents for being patient when they're just going to watch Lakeridge Health Corp in Oshawa and Port Perry and Bowmanville expand the services not just in the community but in facilities.

Most recently, the Honourable Cam Jackson was at the celebration of International Year of Older Persons. The co-chairs of my committee, completely non-political, Kent Farndale and Harold Hammond, hosted the day. They were very fortunate; they arranged Don Herron, who is the co-chair of the Canadian coordination committee, and Lois Neely, who's the provincial representative on the Canadian committee. We had a wonderful celebration. At that celebration, Cam Jackson brought real dollars to the community. Liz Fulford from Durham community care was there to receive the funding for community-based services. It's an ongoing commitment to drive services closer to people. I work with community groups, whether it's service clubs, families or individual students who come to the constituency office.

As the time is running out, I want to complete my remarks. I've had the privilege, under the International

Year of Older Persons in 1999, to meet a wonderful individual who is recognized with the Order of France, with the Legion of Honour from France, Mr Fred West, who will be celebrating his 100th birthday on May 15, 1999. He served in the First World War. He's in good health. I say hello to Fred and his family and I thank the people in the community and the Legion in Bowmanville that support him. Even Fred and the young people I speak to realize that change is difficult. Respectfully, I stand here and say that with the courage and leadership of the tough decisions that have been made, they should share in the satisfaction of a job almost done.

I appeal to each of you: Each problem in the future will have a number of choices to be made. There will be those that challenge us and those that promise us. They will promise to do one thing, whether it's the helicopters or whether it's the airport, and the Liberal solution to every plan is to spend more of your taxpayer money. I appeal to you; the throne speech had the message. It has been difficult but the people of Ontario —

The Deputy Speaker: Comments and questions?

Mr Gerretsen: The way the member started, I almost thought it was his swan song in the Legislature, but he made some valid points. I think the most valid point he made was about trying to build consensus around an issue when he talked about how he brought together the teachers and the various partners in the education system and how they had a good discussion and came up with some valid recommendations for that school or number of schools that he was talking about.

I suppose the real question that a lot of people out there are having is, why haven't you done that about a lot of the changes you have made? If there's one criticism that I continually hear about this government when I travel around and canvass door to door as I have for the last three or four months, it is that you've gone too far and certainly too fast and you've bulldozed over a lot of people.

I'm absolutely convinced that when your government was elected back in 1995 — and you won that election, I'll grant you that — a lot of people out there thought they were getting the Conservative government that had built consensus in Ontario under the leadership of Leslie Frost, John Robarts and Bill Davis. That's who the people thought they were getting. The perception out there, and my experience from being in this House, is that they didn't get anything like that. Since that period of time, you have antagonized and fought with just about every group that is out there. We start off with the most vulnerable in our society, the people on welfare, and we go to the teachers, the nurses, just about every group that's out there. Why didn't you try to build some consensus around the issues, which is the one thing —

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Cullen: I'm glad to comment on the remarks of the member for Durham East. Listening to his comments that he spoke in a quiet and considered way, you could tell that he was concerned about teachers' reactions in his community. He spent a long time talking about that, and I

think he's correct to be concerned, because damage has been done to our educational system by the government that he's a member of.

They have taken \$1 billion out of education. They have put in this one-size-fits-all funding formula which has penalized the urban boards. They have linked the construction of new schools with the use of school space, and one has nothing to do with the other. He's finding that teachers were quite upset when his government insisted that secondary teachers teach 25 minutes more and had these wonderful ads with the clock on them. No one ever asked, does this mean students get taught 25 minutes more? Of course they don't get taught 25 minutes more. As a matter of fact, what happens is that the teacher gets 25 more students to teach, which means there's less time per pupil and therefore clearly a reduction in the quality of education. No wonder he's concerned when teachers who live the experience — they see the ads on TV — know the damage this government has done. No wonder he is concerned.

I have to agree with him on one thing, though, and that is: How is this going to be solved? We have a fiscally responsible platform to find the money that addresses the issue because it comes down to the income tax cut. But when you listen to the Liberals who talk a good game, who are concerned about the cuts, this is why I say if you are truly concerned about the impact of the Harris agenda, the damage of that income tax cut on education — you can't waste your vote on the Liberals because they do not have the funds to restore the damage. For his community, even though he may see that the Liberals are the challenge —

The Deputy Speaker: Thank you.

Mr Galt: I finally heard something from the member for Ottawa West that I agree with, and that is, "Don't waste your vote on a Liberal."

It's just a real pleasure to sit here and listen to the member for Durham East make his presentation. He's my neighbour, really, in the riding to the west — a very thoughtful, very considered, very well planned and thought-out presentation that reflected on the throne speech. Listening to other members speaking, especially the member for Kingston and The Islands, I noticed that you wouldn't know that they were addressing the throne speech. This one was very thoughtful, the way he made reference to the International Year of Older Persons and talked about Fred, who belongs to the Legion in his community, very effective.

He talked about some of the difficult decisions we've had to make as a party, that our leader has had to make — very effective as a leader — but they were necessary, tough, difficult decisions. Change is difficult at any time, but after 10 years, a decade, of being out on an economic desert, a lost decade, something had to be done. The member for Kingston and The Islands said that everything we were doing was great except it was too much too fast. Well, when you had 10 years of nothing happening, we were trying to catch up. In five years, to catch up for the 10 lost years, things did have to move fast. It

was unfortunate that it had to move that fast, but this country was in big trouble. We didn't have any choice but to move very quickly because we were on the edge of economic disaster, bankruptcy, whatever you want to describe it as. We had to get the economy under control, and we did: 540,000 net new jobs. The result has been that we can now do something for health care, we can now do something for our education.

2100

The Deputy Speaker: The Chair recognizes the member for Sault Ste Marie.

Mr Martin: I want to thank the Liberals for yielding their time and allowing me an opportunity to comment on the speech from the member for Durham East. This may be the last chance I get to respond in this way to a speech that you've made here. I want to make sure that it's worthwhile, given that the election will probably be called next week and we'll all be out there on the hustings, and some of us will be back and some of us won't. That's the reality of this place and that's the dice that we throw and we'll see, won't we?

The member for Durham East, I have to say from the outset, has been a good foot soldier for the Common Sense Revolution. He one of the folks over there who drank the Kool-Aid, who has all the lines down, who knows the rhetoric, who's with the program. I've sat across the table from him at committee on several occasions and we've nearly always been on completely opposite ends of almost every issue and discussion we've had, because he has followed word by word every diktat that the heads of this government, who preside mostly in the Premier's office, have deemed is in keeping with that which is good and right for this province. So to hear him tonight doesn't surprise us. He's in support of the program and will continue to be.

As a bit of an aside, early on in our time together, in the heat of argument I made an ill-considered comment to him that I want to apologize for, because I don't want him to carry that with him should we not come back, one or the other of us, after the next election. I want to think well of him and hopefully he will think well of me. This next election will play out in the best interests of the people of Ontario.

The Deputy Speaker: The member for Durham West — East — has two minutes to respond.

Mr O'Toole: In the next election my riding will be referred to as Durham, so you were more or less correct. Durham West, East — all of it will be Durham.

I want to thank the member for Kingston and The Islands and briefly comment on, why didn't we consult? Well, there had been 10 years of consultation: the Royal Commission on Learning, the acute care study, the whole Fair Tax Commission. We had consulted. It was time for action. The Liberals will still consult, but no action.

The member for Ottawa West, respectfully to teachers, just doesn't get it. The royal commission which that government that he flip-flopped over to, being a Liberal — he's neither one nor the other. He's a push-me, pull-me. They actually kicked him out of the caucus.

Mr Cullen: On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I am a member of the New Democratic caucus and should be recognized as such.

Mr O'Toole: That is the actual fact I was reporting. On education, we're actually spending more on education, more on special education, and he doesn't get it. The royal commission was founded on the basis that education was in some sort of trauma. The government he's a member of now, the NDP, at the time had the royal commission because there was a problem, by definition. The commission said, "There's a problem; let's find a solution." He should pay attention to the script they started. Dave Cooke is carrying on some important amendments: the College of Teachers, education quality.

The member for Northumberland never ceases to amaze me, the number of times he speaks and how accurate he is in his characterization of what has transpired. I compliment him. I work with him, and I think he has difficult challenges in his riding. I know just how hard he's working for the hospitals in Port Hope and Cobourg and trying to find a solution. Every day I see him relentlessly tagging after the Minister of Health and trying to solve the problem.

The Deputy Speaker: The member's time has expired.

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I respectfully request the agreement of the House to give the member another 20 seconds for the interruption from the member who can't remember what party he's in.

The Deputy Speaker: Agreed? No.

Further debate?

Mr Gerretsen: I guess I will be winding up the debate this evening. I want to refer specifically to the throne speech, because this debate is the response to the throne speech. I'd like to refer to one particular bit that contains the following sentence. It states: "Although the people of Ontario have already accomplished a great deal, our work to protect the environment teaches us that we must continue to make progress and cannot coast on yesterday's victories."

I find that line to be very, very ironic, especially in light of the report that came out today by the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario; it's the report for 1998, Open Doors. The people of Ontario should know, first of all, that the Environmental Commissioner is an individual who is not a government employee. It is not a government agency in the normal sense of the word. She and her department are employees of this Legislature and she reports to the Legislature. She reports on how the different environmental rules and regulations and laws are affected in the different ministries as a result of changes to the environmental regulations.

From a very quick perusal of this document — and she has about 150 different recommendations in it as to how government can improve the environment in the various departments from her perspective. But leaving that aside and just dealing with the summary of the report and the

stunning indictment that she gives this government in terms of how it has dealt with the environment —

Mr Rollins: Who hired her?

Mr Gerretsen: "Who hired her?" I hear from the opposite side. I've tried to make it quite clear that this individual is hired by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, not by the government of Ontario, not by the opposition of Ontario. She works for each and every one of us to make sure that the environment is protected and that the government follows its own rules and regulations as far as the environment is concerned.

Let me just read, for those people who may be watching, some of the conclusions she has come to, and then people can make up their own minds as to whether or not the statement contained in the throne speech about the wonderful work this government has done in the environment is actually true.

What does she say? She says, "My 1998 report to the Legislative Assembly documents the decline of Ontario's capacity to protect the environment." She goes on to say: "Environmental initiatives of the Ministry of the Environment, which have been highly touted by the Ontario government, are unlikely to deliver the level of protection promised.... The ministry is retreating from the enforcement of effluent limits and is making little progress on applying pollution prevention to hazardous wastes. It has promised to update 70 provincial air quality standards, but in two years — they promised 70 — "has produced only nine guidelines and no new enforceable standards."

It goes on to say that Ontario's emphasis on less government when it comes to the environment has translated into less enforcement and less protection for the environment.

On hazardous waste management, it states that the Ministry of the Environment "has not made good on its commitment to pollution prevention, and has instead indicated that it hopes to achieve pollution prevention through voluntary initiatives the ministry is promoting to industry."

It goes on and on and on, condemning the government in just about each and every department. It says, for example, "The Ontario government's restructuring of governance for electricity generation will not deliver the promised benefits for the environment. Indeed, my report shows that unless the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Energy, Science and Technology put tough caps on emissions for electricity producers, Ontario's air quality will become even worse."

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On the blue box program — remember how that was hailed across the province for the last 10 or 15 years so that everybody could be involved in protecting the environment — what does she say? "Ontario fares worse than almost every other province in Canada. The blue box system, which was innovative when first introduced, is now facing serious problems."

She goes on to say, "The Ontario government does not have mechanisms in place to ensure that land use policies

that protect the province's environment are being applied."

Today we had a question in the House to the Minister of Transportation that also dealt with the environment. What did she say about that? She said that the Ministry of Transportation provides very little support for public transit, does little to monitor local public transportation systems.

She also states that there is little targeted support for green industries and that none of the money from the Ontario research and development challenge fund has gone into research into new environmental technologies.

That is the summation of the report that she has presented: a condemnation of the government when it comes to the environment, totally and completely. Again, this is not from an interest group, this is not from an outside agency; this is from a person in a department that is directly responsible not to the government but to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Mr Rollins: Who hired her, John?

Mr Gerretsen: They keep saying, "Who hired her?" as if that should make a difference. The point, quite simply, is that an employee that we collectively hired in this Legislative Assembly has condemned your government on the environment.

I know to a lot of people the environment is not as high in people's priorities as some of the other issues that are out there, but as far as I'm concerned, this is a total condemnation as to what you have not done in the whole field of the environment.

The other issue I hear about out there as I go door to door is the government's advertising techniques. Just recently there have actually been some advertisements paid for by the PC Party, but I know from just talking to people that they quite frankly are getting sick and tired of being continually bombarded by television ads over the last six months. You can't watch a hockey game without having some government ad. You can't empty your mailbox at home any more without getting some sort of pamphlet on health, on safety, on welfare reform, on a report to taxpayers.

Mr Murdoch: Why don't you read them?

Mr Gerretsen: Yes, I've read them. I've read each and every one of them, and they are all pure government propaganda.

There is nothing wrong with a party wanting to let the public out there know what its position is on various issues. Parties fund-raise for that and they put out their message for that. But to use the taxpayers' money to finance over \$100 million of blatant partisan advertising, the likes of which we have never seen before in this province, is wrong and the people of Ontario know that it's wrong. Particularly when it's happening at a time when there have been so many cutbacks in health care and education, the people are asking, "Why isn't that money being spent on some much-needed health care programs or education programs?"

Let me just give you one example that affects my own riding. Last October, 2,000 individuals were cut off from

nursing and home care, community care, in my community because the money that the CCAC had had simply run out. They could no longer service those people. They were \$1 million short. Wouldn't it have made a lot more sense to take \$1 million out of the \$100-million advertising budget, propaganda budget that this government has been involved in and provide care for the individuals in my community? And the same thing in the other communities out there. That would have made sense.

The most telling situation that I witnessed personally in the last three to four months was when I canvassed one day and ran into an individual, a lady in her mid-70s, who was very concerned about being cut off from home care. I somehow was under the impression that she was talking about herself. She wasn't all that quick of foot and obviously was not in the best of health, but she was able to get around. She said to me after awhile, "Mr Gerretsen, I'm not talking about myself. Come on in and meet my 99-year-old mother," who was lying on a couch under a blanket in a fetal position. She said: "That's the individual who has been cut off. We used to get two hours of home care and nursing care on a daily basis for my mother because I cannot look after her adequately, and that has been cut back to one or two hours a week."

Regardless of your political affiliation, this was a drastic situation, so I contacted home care. I got the necessary permission from the individuals involved to talk about this particular case. I contacted the community care access centre and I said, "Is it true that this individual has been cut off?" I was basically told, "Yes, because we have more urgent cases and we simply do not have enough money in the budget to take care of this."

Two things came to mind: (1) It is totally wrong that that individual should not have been helped; and (2) even from a purely economic sense it makes absolutely no sense because that individual cannot continue to live under those circumstances. One of two things will happen: Either she will pass on or she will end up in an institution at probably about 30 or 40 times the cost it would have taken to provide two hours of home care and nursing care to that individual. That is only one case. Hopefully, it was the worst of the 2,000 cases — I have no idea — but continually I hear that comment from people: "Why are they cutting this off? Why have they got money for this kind of advertising?" Then we wonder why people get cynical about politicians.

The other very interesting thing that I noticed is that people are wondering why all these government announcements are coming out right now. Why is there money available all of a sudden for this, that and other projects, many of them extremely worthwhile projects? I did a little bit of research and what did I find out? I found out that the contingency fund in last year's budget for the province of Ontario was not at the traditional level of about \$280 million.

I agree that every organization and every government should have a contingency fund. We had it at the local level, a much lesser amount obviously, but so should the province of Ontario. When you have a \$50-billion budget

out there you have to build in some contingency. That has traditionally been at about the \$280-million level. As a matter of fact, I can give you each and every number that goes back to 1990 as to what the actual amount was.

Guess what it was last year. Not \$280 million, but \$830 million for contingency — an increase of over half a billion dollars. That is not my propaganda; that comes right out of the budgetary documents. That's where the money came from for all of these wonderful good-news announcements we're getting all over the province. I'll tell you, I'm not for a moment suggesting that the money that the hospitals, that these very needy groups that do a lot of good work in our community do not require these funds. They do. They also required them two years ago, three years ago and four years ago. Why is it all of sudden available now?

We know there's an election coming up, and we can all sort of smile and chuckle about it because isn't that the way politics has always been practised? I have great difficulty with that, I'll be honest with you.

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First of all, you ran on a platform that you were going to be different. You aren't any different. You socked it all away last year so you could make all these kinds of funding announcements right now. It isn't right. People out there realize that. It just increases the general public's cynicism about politics in general and politicians on an individual basis, probably irrespective of party. It doesn't do the system any good, and it doesn't do our democracy any good, because if more and more cynicism builds up in the system, in the long run we all suffer from that.

I just want to get back to one other point, our 20/20 Plan. I find it very interesting that some of my Tory colleagues are taking great exception with the title of the 20/20 Plan. Of course, it talks about a vision for Ontario for the year 2020, a clear vision. I understand that the plan you're going to announce tomorrow was going to be a 20/20 plan as well. When you heard that we called our plan a 20/20 Plan, you decided to call it something else. So don't make it sound as if you don't like the name or this, that and the other thing. There have been a couple of news reports on that, as a matter of fact.

What do we say in there? First of all, we say that the two most important issues out there for the average person are health care and education. I would say health care is probably the predominant issue, because everybody knows somebody who's affected by the health care system, whereas with respect to education, some people who may not have any children in the system or may not be involved with the system may not have as much interest. But certainly everybody can identify with health care.

The first thing we're going to do is hire back those 10,000 nurses you fired indirectly by not giving the hospitals enough money two or three years ago. As a matter of fact, you had to make over \$400 million available for the severance packages.

We can disagree about a lot of things, but I think we can all agree on the fact that when you walk into a hospital nowadays and you walk on any ward, there simply

aren't as many nurses as there were five or 10 years ago. At one time, you were told that you could only visit patients in the hospital between 2 and 4 and 7 and 9; now you're almost asked to stay there if the person is in an extremely bad situation so that you can look after the individual, because there simply aren't enough nurses on most floors to look after them. These people are over-worked, and they've reached the limit. We have to build that confidence back into our health care system.

The same thing applies to education. That's why I was taken in by the comments from the member for Durham East. When people say, "What is the most important thing that should be done with the education system?" I always say the same thing. The first and number one thing we ought to do is build back some positive morale in the system, tell the teachers, who are the primary individuals involved in educating our children on a day-to-day basis: "You're doing a good job. You are a positive influence. We rely on you. Any changes we're going to make, we're going to talk to the federations, we're going to consult with them and we're not going to unilaterally impose it on them." Their morale has to be built up. That is something you have probably destroyed more than anything else, the morale of the teachers out there, as far as the education system is concerned, as you've done with so many other public employees. That is the most important thing, to work with them.

The only way you ever get anywhere in life in the long run is by working with people and by building a consensus, whether we're talking about the health care system, the education system or any aspect of government. You can shout this down, you can make comments about it, but in the long run you know I'm right: that you don't get very far by antagonizing the people, whether it's in health care or education, whom in effect you're going to rely on to implement the new policies and the new aspects of either health care or education that you're trying to implement.

Thank you very much, Speaker, for your undivided attention.

The Deputy Speaker: On Monday, April 26, 1999, Mrs Munro (Durham-York) moved, seconded by Mr Preston (Brant-Haldimand), that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

"To the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has addressed to us."

On Tuesday, April 27, 1999, Mr McGuinty moved that the address in reply to the speech from the throne be amended by adding the following thereto:

"This House profoundly regrets that the Mike Harris government has acted on an agenda that has created a crisis in health care and education and threatens our economic future, and condemns the government for:

"Breaking its promises in health care by cutting \$870 million from our hospitals, closing one out of every five hospitals and imposing \$300 million worth of new user fees;

"Hurting patient care by turning our emergency rooms into waiting rooms, firing nurses until Ontario had the fewest nurses per capita in the country; and forcing more and more patients to go to the US or turn to private companies for everything from basic medical care to cancer treatment;

"Breaking its promises in education by cutting \$1 billion from our schools — after promising not to take one cent out of classroom education;

"Hurting our children and students by closing schools, slashing special education and English-as-a-second-language programs, forcing more and more parents to turn to private school, where enrolment is up 15%; and raising tuition fees by more than 60% to make Ontario the most expensive place in Canada to get a post-secondary education;

"Threatening our economic future by increasing property taxes and introducing new user fees, failing to balance the budget, and adding \$22 billion to the provincial debt to raise the total provincial debt to over \$110 billion."

The first question to be decided is Mr McGuinty's amendment to the motion.

All those in favour of Mr McGuinty's amendment to the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

I declare the amendment lost.

We now come to the motion of Mrs Munro.

All those in favour of Mrs Munro's motion will please "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

It is therefore resolved, that an humble address be presented to Her Honour the Lieutenant Governor as follows:

"To the Honourable Hilary M. Weston, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario:

"We, Her Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Legislative Assembly of the province of Ontario, now assembled, beg leave to thank Your Honour for the gracious speech Your Honour has addressed to us."

It being past 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2131.

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**Legislative Assembly
of Ontario**

Third Session, 36th Parliament

**Assemblée législative
de l'Ontario**

Troisième session, 36^e législature

**Official Report
of Debates
(Hansard)**

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Thursday 29 April 1999

Jeudi 29 avril 1999



Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Thursday 29 April 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Jeudi 29 avril 1999

*The House met at 1330.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

GOVERNMENT'S RECORD

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Today we saw again what Mike Harris thinks about the most vulnerable in our society.

Apparently, more tax cuts are coming our way. How much more will he borrow to fulfill that commitment? How much more will the debt of the province grow to fulfill that commitment, a debt that has grown by more than \$20 billion in the last four years? How much more pain will the most vulnerable in our society face because of Mike Harris?

Speaking of fulfilling commitments, how are we to believe anything in this document? Common Sense I said no hospital closings. So far, he has closed over 38 hospitals.

I want Mike Harris to tell the people of Kingston why they should trust him. He broke the promises he made the last time. He's closing schools and he's closing hospitals.

In Kingston, we've seen the waiting list for surgery grow from six weeks to one year in neurosurgery. We have seen the frail elderly cut off from homemaking services. We have seen children, parents and teachers confused as they try to figure out just what Mike Harris is doing to our education system.

Mike Harris believes in confrontation. He has attacked the most vulnerable. He has attacked teachers and nurses.

The upcoming election is about choice. Our 20/20 Plan is a clear vision for Ontario, an Ontario that has clear, enforceable standards for health care, the best education system for our children, tough new laws and enforcement for our environment, and a responsible fiscal plan to deal with our finances.

Ontarians in Kingston and throughout this province will not be fooled again.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): Today the Ombudsman released the results of her recent investigation into the Family Responsibility Office. It's clear that despite the rhetoric of this Attorney General, the Harris government is failing to meet its obligations to the thous-

ands of families in Ontario who are owed support payments.

The Ombudsman said: "From the evidence gathered in my investigation, it is clear the FRO remains far from stabilized. In its third year of operation, the FRO is still failing to fulfill its mandate through timely and effective enforcement of its caseload."

The reason why is that the Attorney General and this Conservative government have repeatedly failed to provide money to hire the staff needed to make this office work. The Ombudsman made it clear that this is the responsibility of the Attorney General but, as she said, "I believe the ministry has failed to discharge this obligation and as a result, the FRO is not in a position to carry out its mandate."

The Ombudsman concluded it was unreasonable for this situation to continue. She made it clear that people who are financially dependent on the FRO deserve better, and she called on the Harris government to take all the steps needed to guarantee the office would be staffed to get the job done.

The Harris government severely cut staff at the family support plan in 1996 to help finance the phony tax scheme. The Attorney General should explain to families why this government has money to give a tax break to the wealthiest Ontarians but has no money to staff the Family Responsibility Office so families can get the support payments they are owed.

HEALTH CARE FUNDING

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): I rise today to state that our government's health care plan is working in Simcoe Centre.

Contrary to the continuing unsubstantiated litany from the opposition about spending cuts in health care, my constituents know that health care spending has increased substantially under our watch. My constituents know that we are bringing state-of-the-art essential health care services closer to them than ever before.

The Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie was opened under our watch as a brand new, state-of-the-art acute care facility second to none in the province. To date, we have invested an additional \$15-plus million there to fund new services like MRI, breast screening, expanded oncology service, and a soon-to-be-opened kidney dialysis unit. Simcoe Centre is growing rapidly, and RVH received growth funding increases of more than \$800,000, with more to come, to help them deal with the increasing demand.

Our government's health care investments mean that constituents can stop travelling to Toronto or Hamilton to reach state-of-the-art diagnostic and life-saving treatments. Patients who depend on regular kidney dialysis treatment will not have the additional stress of driving long distances in harsh winter conditions for their treatment.

Currently I'm working with ER professionals who plan to open an urgent care clinic in the bustling south Barrie-Innisfil area.

Our government's health care plan is working. As a result, my constituents are receiving additional state-of-the-art health care services that they need closer to home than ever before.

LANDFILL

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): In September 1998, the Ministry of the Environment launched an investigation into allegations of dumping illegal hazardous waste in the Taro landfill site in Stoney Creek. Eight months later, the ministry has as yet not released this report. The residents are fearful for their safety and their health, and the company has a cloud hanging over it.

The report that was submitted by the investigators was completed in February 1999. That was three months ago. I find it hard to understand why the minister so far has failed to release this report. Is there something he's afraid of? Do the residents not have the right to know what went into that landfill site? Does the company not have the right to know whether they're guilty or innocent?

Clearly, what is happening here is that political considerations on behalf of the government are getting in the way of the releasing of this report. It also shows clear incompetence on behalf of the government and the minister or, worse, a political cover-up. What is the minister afraid of?

I cannot believe that in eight months you could not complete a report into dumping in one landfill site. You're either acknowledging that you don't have the ability to do it or, worse, you're acknowledging that you're playing political games with the health and safety of the residents. I ask the minister to immediately release the report into the investigation into the Taro landfill site so the residents can be at ease, so the company can deal with the problem and the community can get on with its life.

If the minister wants to put political considerations first and is afraid to release it before the election, he should come clean and say so, because clearly this is nothing more than a political cover-up to try to save their butt on —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Statements.

ARBOUR DAY

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): Tomorrow marks the beginning of Arbour Week in Ontario. Arbour Day was a day that was set aside to plant and care

for trees in 1872. This year, to mark the International Year of Older Persons, I'm going to be involved with a number of students and others in Windsor to plant a commemorative forest in St Rose Park.

This effort is the result of organization of work by the department of parks and recreation in the city of Windsor, the City of Windsor Retirees Group, the Essex Region Conservation Authority, Essex County Field Naturalists Club, the Edward Street Walkabouts, Union Gas and the Little River Enhancement Group.

There are local schools that are going to be involved in the planting of trees in the park: students from A. V. Graham, Concord, St John Vianney, Princess Anne, Our Lady of Lourdes, McManus and Riverside Secondary School. The students will be planting trees to honour seniors who have made a significant contribution to their development.

Also, A. V. Graham teacher Julie Leadbetter has written a song called "In your Name" to mark the occasion. Arbour Day this year will be a perfect way for young people in our community to pay tribute to their elders and to learn the importance of planting trees as a way of making sure the environment they leave their children is better than the one they inherited from their parents.

HIGHWAY 24

Mr Ted Arnott (Wellington): The county of Wellington has requested that I bring their concerns to the attention of the House regarding the costs associated with the transfer of Highway 24 to the county. I want to thank my seatmate, the Minister of Transportation, for personally meeting with a delegation from our county last December to discuss this issue.

The county has requested that I inform the House of the following: An environmental assessment study approved in November 1997, just prior to the date of transfer, identified Highway 24 as experiencing the highest accident rates for a two-lane highway in the province because of its poor alignment, and it recommended a four-lane, controlled-access highway.

Using the criteria applied two years ago when the province transferred responsibility for certain highways to municipalities, a four-lane, controlled-access highway is not one which typically serves mostly local traffic. If the province does not step in to assist the county with the estimated \$35-million to \$40-million realignment of Highway 24, county residents could face an increase in their property tax burden of over 20% over the next 10 years.

Highway 24 was described in the ministry's own environmental assessment document as a major north-south transportation link in Ontario.

With no significant opportunities in Wellington county to generate private funds, the county is asking either that the province financially assist the county, given the unique nature of the work required on Highway 24, or reassume responsibility for the section of Highway 24

from Guelph to Cambridge through Wellington county. This is a unique situation in Ontario and I support the county's position.

I know that the minister will give this matter serious and prompt consideration.

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GASOLINE PRICES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Members of the Ontario Legislature will have an opportunity to turn talk into action by passing a bill I will be introducing that will protect independent retailers from the oil giants in this province.

We in the provincial Parliament have the jurisdiction to pass a predatory pricing law that would prohibit the big oil companies from selling gas to their own retailers at a price below what they would charge independent retailers. This measure would help to maintain some semblance of competition in the market as the independent operators would be protected from predatory pricing practices by the major oil companies.

With the co-operation of all members of the House, this bill could receive quick passage and be in effect next week.

Those who are content to point fingers elsewhere or to huff and puff at the oil companies, then retreat when they bark back, will be able to take direct action as provincial legislators by passing expeditiously the bill I will introduce, a bill I have asked the government to introduce for the past three years.

The Premier has refused to call the captains of the oil industry on the carpet for the huge increases in gas prices before long weekends and this government refuses to do anything to investigate what appears to be collusion as retail prices rise in concert and remain very close.

By protecting the independent retailer, this Legislature, like some other provinces, and many states in the US, could promote competition in the market and give consumers a break.

POVERTY

Mr Tony Martin (Sault Ste Marie): Of all the things this government has done to this province over the last four years, and there have been many that have been damaging and hurtful, the most reprehensible, the most damaging and the most morally indefensible is their attack on the poor and their approach to issues of poverty.

No matter how you look at it, the majority of people in need of assistance in this province are children, people with disabilities, people mentally not well and the 8% to 10% who, because of the economic model we work under, will never have worked because that is the natural rate of unemployment always present now in Ontario.

In the last four years we have cut their income, removed or diminished significantly support programs and blamed them for everything that ails us.

The new Blueprint delivered by Mike Harris today for Ontario, if he's elected again, takes this a step further. Where Ontario has prided itself on the fact that no one should ever, no matter their circumstances in this province, go without, we will now have, if we follow this Blueprint, a class of people, by way of the new regulations put in place, who will no longer qualify for anything. Not only that, when they find that they no longer qualify for assistance of any sort, they will not be able to beg, they will not be able to panhandle on the streets of Toronto or any community across this province because if they do, they will be thrown in jail.

Shame on you; shame on you.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you. Time's up.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): I'm pleased today to inform this House of some exciting developments taking place in research and development at McMaster University. As you know, Mr Speaker, this government believes that we must invest in research and development if we are to keep our best and brightest research minds here in Ontario.

In 1997 this government developed the Ontario research and development challenge fund which will provide \$500 million over 10 years in matching grants to academic institutions to ensure they continue their work in research and development of innovative products and technologies.

McMaster University has been the recipient of over \$30 million in research dollars over the past two years, including a project to develop a steel research centre funded by Stelco and Dofasco in Hamilton, as well as a new chair in gastroenterology funded by Glaxo Wellcome, a pharmaceutical corporation concerned about nervous intestinal problems that people encounter.

Dr Peter George, president of McMaster University, has been very proactive in securing partnerships with the private sector because he believes strongly that by pursuing research partnerships it will, in the words of Dr Peter George, "benefit universities by ensuring their programs stay current and relevant and by helping keep some of the brightest minds in Ontario."

CASE REPORTS, OMBUDSMAN

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I wish to inform the members that I have laid upon the table the Ombudsman's case reports in the matters of the complaint of Mrs P regarding the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the investigation of the Family Responsibility Office's processing of its caseload, the investigation of the timeliness of birth-relative searches conducted by the Ministry of Community and Social Services, and the investigation of the timeliness of the Ontario Human Rights Commission's investigative process.

I would also like to note that the Ombudsman is in the Speaker's gallery today. Welcome.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE CONSUMER PROTECTION ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA PROTECTION DES CONSOMMATEURS EN MATIÈRE D'ASSURANCE-AUTOMOBILE

Mr Sampson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 21, An Act to increase fairness and consumer protection while maintaining a balanced and stable automobile insurance plan in Ontario / Projet de loi 21, Loi visant à accroître l'équité et la protection des consommateurs tout en maintenant un régime d'assurance-automobile équilibré et stable en Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]): This bill is aimed at fine-tuning the Ontario automobile insurance system to ensure that injured accident victims get the treatment they need and that rates remain stable and affordable.

Among other things, this bill would improve children's statutory accident benefits and their right to sue in court, eliminate the deductible for pain and suffering damages in large awards, and require insurance agents to disclose to consumers that they represent only one company, thereby bringing them in line with the existing rule for brokers.

GASOLINE PRICING ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LE PRIX DE L'ESSENCE

Mr Bradley moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 22, An Act respecting the price of gasoline / Projet de loi 22, Loi concernant le prix de l'essence.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The purpose of this bill is to preserve competition in the gasoline retailing business by prohibiting the major oil companies from selling at one price to their own dealers and a different price to independents.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): Mr Speaker, I'd like to ask if I can have unanimous consent to introduce a bill on behalf of my colleague from Essex South, who has been called away.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

CONSUMER PROTECTION AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA PROTECTION DU CONSOMMATEUR

Mr Agostino, on behalf of Mr Crozier, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 23, An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act / Projet de loi 23, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): The purpose of Mr Crozier's bill is to extend the scope of section 36 of the Consumer Protection Act to protect consumers from the practice of negative option billing with respect to the provision of services. Currently, this section only applies to the provision of goods.

The Speaker: Motions?

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): Mr Speaker, may I have permission to have a statement on Sexual Assault Prevention Month?

The Speaker: Sure, but we're in the middle of motions right now, so I'll finish that and then we'll go right back to you.

MOTIONS

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to move motions to strike legislative standing committees.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move that the membership of the standing committees for this session be as follows:

Standing committee on administration of justice: Mr Boushy, Mr Crozier, Mr Kormos, Mr Martiniuk, Mr Ramsay, Mr Rollins, Mr Stewart, Mr Tascona, Mr Wood (London South);

Standing committee on estimates: Mr Bartolucci, Mr Bisson, Mr Cleary, Mr Doyle, Mr Kennedy, Mr Parker, Mr Pettit, Mr Wettlaufer, Mr Young;

Standing committee on finance and economic affairs: Mr Arnott, Mr Baird, Mr Brown (Scarborough West), Mr Guzzo, Mr Kwinter, Mr Phillips, Mr Rollins, Mr Silipo, Mr Wettlaufer;

Standing committee on general government: Mr Colle, Mr Danford, Mrs Fisher, Mr Froese, Mr Gilchrist, Mr Lessard, Mrs Munro, Mr O'Toole, Mr Sergio;

Standing committee on government agencies: Mr Geretsen, Mr Gravelle, Mr Grimmitt, Mr Johnson (Perth), Ms Lankin, Mr Marchese, Mr Newman, Mr Spina, Mr Stewart;

Standing committee on the Legislative Assembly: Mr Curling, Mr DeFaria, Mr Fox, Mr Hardeman, Mrs Johns, Mr McLean, Mr Morin (Carleton East), Mrs Mushinski, Mr North, Mr Ouellette, Mr Pouliot;

Standing committee on the Ombudsman: Mr Agostino, Mr Beaubien, Mr Ford, Mrs Johns, Mr McLean, Mr Pettit, Mrs Pupatello, Mr Vankoughnet, Mr Wood (Cochrane North);

Standing committee on public accounts: Mr Beaubien, Mr Grandmaître, Mr Grimmer, Mr Lalonde, Ms Martel, Mr Patten, Mr Preston, Mr Tascona, Mr Young;

Standing committee on regulations and private bills: Mr Barrett, Mr Boushy, Mr Caplan, Mr Hardeman, Mr Leadston, Mr Martin, Mr Ruprecht, Mr Shea, Mr Sheehan;

Standing committee on resources development: Mr Christopherson, Mr Chudleigh, Mr Conway, Mrs Elliott, Mr Galt, Mr Hastings, Mr Hoy, Mr Maves, Mr Preston;

Standing committee on social development: Mrs Boyd, Mr Carroll, Ms Castrilli, Mr Duncan, Mr Hudak, Mr Klees, Mrs McLeod, Mrs Ross, Mr Smith.

The Speaker: Mr Sterling moves that the membership of the standing committees for this session be as follows:

The standing committee —

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

HOUSE SITTING

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding this evening's sitting.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): This is a motion without notice to — why don't you read it again. I couldn't hear.

Hon Mr Sterling: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice regarding this evening's sitting.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move that, notwithstanding the order of the House of April 26, 1999, the House shall not meet from 6:30 to 9:30 pm this evening.

The Speaker: Agreed? I heard a no.

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion the ayes have it.

Let's call in the members; it's a five-minute bell.

Can I get the members' attention? It's a 30-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1354 to 1401.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): All those in favour of Mr Sterling's motion, please stand one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Bassett, Isabel
Beaubien, Marcel
Brown, Jim
Carroll, Jack
Chudleigh, Ted
Clement, Tony
Cunningham, Dianne
Ecker, Janet
Elliott, Brenda
Fisher, Barbara
Flaherty, Jim
Ford, Douglas B.
Fox, Gary
Grimmett, Bill
Hardeman, Ernie

Johnson, David
Klees, Frank
Leach, Al
McLean, Allan K.
Munro, Julia
Murdoch, Bill
Mushinski, Marilyn
Newman, Dan
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Palladini, Al
Parker, John L.
Pettit, Trevor
Rollins, E.J. Douglas
Ross, Lillian

Sheehan, Frank
Skarica, Toni
Smith, Bruce
Snobelen, John
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tsubouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Witmer, Elizabeth
Wood, Bob
Young, Terence H.

The Speaker: All those opposed, please rise one at a time and be recognized by the Clerk.

Nays

Boyd, Marion
Bradley, James J.
Caplan, David
Churley, Marilyn
Cordiano, Joseph
Gerretsen, John

Kennedy, Gerard
Kwinter, Monte
Lankin, Frances
Lessard, Wayne
Martel, Shelley
Martin, Tony

McLeod, Lyn
Phillips, Gerry
Pupatello, Sandra
Ruprecht, Tony
Sergio, Mario
Silipo, Tony

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 53; the nays are 18.

The Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, I want to move the schedule for the committee meetings to be established this session. I need unanimous consent in order to do this.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The government House leader wants to move the schedule for the committee meetings this coming session. He needs unanimous consent. Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move that the following schedule for committee meetings be established for this session:

The standing committee on administration of justice may meet on Monday and Tuesday afternoons following routine proceedings;

The committee on estimates may meet on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons following routine proceedings;

The standing committee on finance and economic affairs may meet on Thursday mornings and Thursday afternoons following routine proceedings;

The standing committee on general government may meet on Thursday mornings and Thursday afternoons following routine proceedings;

The standing committee on government agencies may meet on Wednesday mornings;

The standing committee on the Legislative Assembly may meet on Wednesday afternoons following routine proceedings;

The standing committee on the Ombudsman may meet on Wednesday mornings;

Ayes

Arnott, Ted
Baird, John R.
Barrett, Toby

Harnick, Charles
Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris

Runciman, Robert W.
Sampson, Rob
Shea, Derwyn

The standing committee on public accounts may meet on Thursday mornings;

The standing committee on regulations and private bills may meet on Wednesday mornings;

The standing committee on resources development may meet on Monday and Wednesday afternoons following routine proceedings;

The standing committee on social development may meet on Monday and Tuesday afternoons following routine proceedings; and

That no standing or select committee may meet except in accordance with this schedule or as ordered by the House.

The Speaker: Mr Sterling moves —

Interjection: Dispense.

The Speaker: Dispense? Agreed.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that the standing committee on regulations and private bills be authorized to meet on Monday morning, May 3, 1999.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Mr Sterling moves that the standing committee on regulations and private bills be authorized to meet on May 3 at 10 am.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

SEXUAL ASSAULT PREVENTION MONTH

Hon Dianne Cunningham (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues): I am seeking consent to make a statement with regard to Sexual Assault Prevention Month.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? Agreed.

Hon Mrs Cunningham: May is Sexual Assault Prevention Month in Ontario. It's a time for us to acknowledge that we are all responsible for stopping sexual assault.

Our government is committed to ending violence of all kinds. We have provided strong leadership to ensure that women have the support they need and that perpetrators are held accountable for their crimes. We are ensuring that public education teaches the important lesson that the violence must stop, that it has a devastating impact on women's lives and the lives of their children, our families, our communities and our country. The costs for victims of sexual assault and their families go far beyond dollars and cents.

For women who have suffered the pain, whose potential has been restricted, whose independence has been diminished, we must commit ourselves to stopping the violence.

For crisis intervention workers, the front-line workers in shelters, the police, health workers, for our neighbours, and indeed for whole communities, the effects of this violence are both long-term and far-reaching.

Each one of us, individually and together, must take responsibility, and we must continue to work to build safe homes, safe communities and safe workplaces.

Positive change can occur. We have the responsibility to teach boys that physical intimidation and unwanted touching are not jokes, they are crimes. They must learn, in their relationships with women, that attempts to manipulate, intimidate or control are not acceptable to anyone.

We have the responsibility to teach girls and young women that no one has the right to touch them in any way without their consent. We must teach young women that no one has the right to limit their freedom, their choices, their access to family and friends. Society supports all of our rights and freedoms and no acts of violence or intimidation should go unreported.

Men, as our friends, our family and colleagues, have a crucial role in ending the crime of sexual assault. We actually count on them to be a strong voice in conveying the message that violence and abusive behaviour is totally unacceptable.

Our government continues to keep its promise to improve services and programs. Since the Agenda for Action violence prevention strategy began in 1997, we have launched over 40 new initiatives across some 10 ministries to create flexible services to meet the needs of women. I'm proud to stand in this House today and share with my colleagues the Agenda for Action progress report, which summarizes our many accomplishments in this area.

1410

For the members of this House who are wanting to explain to their communities the programs that actually extend across some 10 ministries, for all of us in our constituency offices, because this is a non-partisan issue, I hope they will put out these programs that explain the services that are available.

This is an Agenda for Action report on the first 18 months since we all agreed together to move in this direction.

For example, one of the new programs is the new Trillium sexual assault and domestic violence centre in Mississauga. It's one of many new programs that offers women more choices. This warm, welcoming centre brings together the health care professionals, the police and child care services and the shelters to ensure women who have experienced sexual assault receive exceptional care in a safe and compassionate environment.

All sectors of communities are working together in every way they can to stop sexual assault and to stop the violence.

We must all accept the responsibility — I will say this once again — ourselves and take the opportunity to do whatever we can to end sexual assault. No one sector or group can work alone.

Today we encourage everyone to speak out against all forms of violence.

In this Legislative Assembly over the years, as I looked at the statements that have been made since 1978, we've worked together to set the standards. All governments have. We have worked together to stop the violence, and we will continue in our efforts to work together and make our quality of life better for everyone.

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): I don't know where to begin to speak in recognition of May being declared Sexual Assault Prevention Month. Perhaps the best place to begin is to reiterate our support for the implementation of a registry of sexual offenders. I believe that is a step, and I trust an important step, in the prevention of the most vicious sexual attacks.

But the prevention of sexual assault has to go so far beyond that, and it seems to me that we are still doing so little. I don't mean just this government. I mean all governments and I mean, as the minister has said today, all of us.

I wonder what progress we have actually made since last year, when we all rose and made our statements of concern about sexual assault and the importance of prevention. We keep hearing stories of children being abused in settings where they should be safe and I wonder how much we have really done to ensure that our children are not at risk in places where they expect to be safe.

I wonder whether or not the statistics about the sexual abuse of women are any different. A 1993 survey showed that 54% of women had an unwanted sexual experience before the age of 16; that 51% of women over women 16 experienced rape or attempted rape. I have four adult daughters. I wonder what those statistics say to me as a parent and, more important, what those statistics say to my daughters. The statistics aren't theoretical. They are a measure of what is actually happening. They're not just numbers, because there are real people behind them.

The new initiatives of the current government that were released today focus on the justice system. Yes, I agree that sexual assault is a crime. Yes, I agree absolutely that the justice system has to deal with sexual assault in a sensitive and very clear way. We are all still reeling from the impact of the crinoline case, which put the understanding of "no means no" back into the Dark Ages.

We also have to recognize that the vast majority of the women and men and children who are sexually assaulted will never go to the justice system. Those women and men and children who seek help need the immediate support of community-based services, and those services have been cut rather than strengthened, whether we are talking about children's mental health centres or women's shelters.

Women who have been assaulted don't need to be linked to, as I quote the new platform, "the cutting edge information tech of the criminal justice system" as much as they need physical and emotional support and

counselling to deal with the reality of what has happened to them.

Prevention must mean more than prosecution. Women need, more than anything else, to be helped not to be victims and not to be vulnerable at home, at work or on the streets.

It's sadly ironic that as women have become more free to participate fully in our society, they have become more vulnerable.

Children need to be safe in their homes, on their streets and in their classrooms. They have not been safe in the past and they are not yet safe enough.

We are not doing enough to recognize the risks let alone deal with them. We're not doing enough to build awareness of what sexual assault is in all of its manifestations, from violent sexual assault of children by strangers to domestic assault in the home. We need to be aware of the realities of rape, from violent rape to date rape. We need to understand what sexual harassment is and how the abusive power feeds into harassment and assault of the less powerful.

We need to start earlier, before the patterns of behaviour are established. We need to challenge unacceptable behaviour and define more clearly what is and is not acceptable. We need to make it possible to talk about what is happening without denial. We need to make it possible to disclose without fear of guilt or embarrassment or revictimization, and with an assurance of understanding and support. We need to do all of this and more. If we don't, maybe we should stop getting up once a year to make these statements.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I'm pleased to respond on behalf of the NDP this afternoon. I want to start by all of us remembering Theresa Vince, who was murdered in 1996 by a sexual harasser at her workplace, who then killed himself. Theresa worked at Sears. By now we all know the tragic story: She complained, she sought help and advice but she didn't get it. The ultimate happened to her: She was murdered. I start by mentioning Theresa Vince again because we mustn't forget that sometimes when we talk about sexual assault, we don't remember what can happen to women when they're sexually harassed.

I remind the minister again this year, there was a call last year and the year before, as a result of Theresa Vince's murder, that the first week of June be proclaimed as sexual harassment awareness week, which I believe all of us in this House suggested would be a good idea. That still has not been done. I think it's all the more important to be reminded of that today, because we haven't heard a lot of discussion for the past several months, at least since last year, in this House about what happened to Theresa Vince and the life-altering circumstances that happen when women are harassed in the workplace.

I wanted to remind everybody today that we should also remember, when we're talking about sexual assault, that sexual harassment is a very serious problem, and it's experienced by vast numbers of women at some time in their lives. I would ask the minister today once again to

consider declaring the first week of June as sexual harassment awareness month.

We are aware that still, as we speak today, rape crisis centres have reported that statistics of reports of rape are going up, not down, and that the problem we raised last year, about the use of drugs on women to sedate them and render them unconscious, is still a problem. There have been more stories in the media about it again lately. We've seen no movement on that from the federal government or from this government. That has to be remembered. I call again this year, as I did last year, on the federal Liberal government and the government of Ontario to look at ways that we can move.

One of the problems, as I pointed out before, is that in most cases women cannot be tested to see if the drug was used — sometimes up to 12 hours after; then it's too late — unless they agree to press charges, and of course in many cases there are many reasons why women don't want to do that.

This brings me to the issues around where our focus should be. As I've said many times in this House, I or my party has no problem with the focus on the justice system; it's very important and the work that's being done there is good work. Unfortunately, the problem is that most of the focus of this government is on the justice system and we're moving away from the community-based support systems that we hear time and time again are so important to victims of sexual assault, from the front-line women, the women who have worked in this area for a long time or who are survivors of sexual assault themselves.

1420

It's very important that more work be done on making sure that the community-based support is still there. I'm afraid that with some of the cuts that have happened across the board to rape crisis centres, this government is moving away from that. I want to remind everybody today that indeed we still have a lot of work to do.

The last thing I'd like to say is that there's an issue now that has presented itself to us, and that is one that may seem like a very minor issue to most people, but it is the city of Toronto giving the taxi companies permission to raise fees at night — a night service charge.

I have to admit that when I first heard about that I didn't really think much about the ramifications and implications of it, but then just immediately after I started thinking about it I realized that a lot of women who work late at night have no other way of getting home except to take a cab. I believe the rape crisis centres and others came out today asking that people speak up and not support this measure and take that into account. It's an issue we all need to think about and bring up, and make sure there's some attention and focus paid to that.

One of the things we all know and all have to remember to be aware of at any level of government is that when we consider making changes to laws, sometimes we forget to look at all the different sectors in our society that may be affected. It's clear that this particular measure would have a detrimental effect on

women who, for whatever reasons, are out late at night and whose only choice is to take a cab. Of course, many women who work at night are low-wage earners. This could create a mammoth problem.

We need to look at our laws in the context of safety. I'm hoping that this is a message we can carry to the taxi companies and the Toronto city government to make them aware that this new measure may impact on women's safety.

I would like to thank all the members of the House for their attention to this issue today, and hope that we can continue to work in any way we can to make our streets safer for women and their homes safer for women and their children.

ORAL QUESTIONS

HEALTH CARE

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): I have a question for the Minister of Health. Minister, you've stripped down the Ontario health system, and that stripped down system hit yet another family on Monday night.

Eric Rodriguez of Uxbridge is 79 years old. On Friday night he was suffering from chest pains. They called the ambulance. The ambulance was there within five minutes. They brought him into the Uxbridge hospital, called North Durham Health Services. The doctors responded, but as they tried, Minister, they ran into your health system. They determined that Mr Rodriguez needed an ICU bed. While he lay on a stretcher, while his whole family was there with him, two doctors tried for hours to find a critical care bed for Mr Rodriguez somewhere, anywhere in the Toronto area.

They failed to find a bed in the Toronto area, not one critical care bed was open and available for Mr Rodriguez. Instead, four hours later they sent him to Kingston by air ambulance. Minister, will you admit today that this is your responsibility? It's your fault that Mr Rodriguez had to go to Kingston.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the member knows, our government has attempted to improve the health system which unfortunately had been badly neglected by previous governments. We have been improving the level of service. We are spending more money than any other government in the history of this province. We've gone from \$17.4 billion to \$18.9 billion. We are ensuring that the appropriate level of services can be provided to people throughout Ontario.

Unfortunately, other governments closed 10,000 beds, but they did not embark upon the process of restructuring to ensure that people would have the beds and services available when they would need them. I'm proud to say that's what our government is doing today, improving the system and making beds available, to ensure that the needs of patients can be addressed.

Mr Kennedy: Minister, your idea of improving the system is spending millions of dollars in government funds on advertising to tell people about the system and spending hundreds of millions of dollars firing nurses. That's your idea of improving the system; it's not in providing nurses and it's not in providing beds.

Your government, and your government alone, cut 70 intensive care beds, part of over 2,000 beds that you cut just in the Toronto area alone in the last three years. You made the system too small. You can't blame the hospitals.

The doctors in this case responded extremely well. They put an external pacemaker on. They tried to keep this patient, Mr Rodriguez, alive. They wanted one simple thing from you, Minister, an intensive care bed, necessary for any time somebody has an emergency like that. They begged the hospitals. The family overheard them saying, "I've got a critical care patient here, and you won't give me a bed?" That family had to stay there and go in and ask every 20 minutes: "Is there a bed? Is there a bed?" The last resort was Kingston. They were air-lifted there.

Do you agree that if you had not cut the 70 beds, Mr Rodriguez would —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Minister of Health.

Hon Mrs Witmer: Maybe the member forgets what his government did not do. Let's take a look at the editorial in the Windsor Star in July 1989 which says:

"For four hours local doctors tried in vain to send Mr Budd to either London or Toronto, where hospitals are mandated to serve the cardiac needs of the Windsor area. The response of the three out-of-town hospitals boiled down to this: No space. Mr Budd was sent to Beaumont Hospital in Detroit where he was operated on but suffered a heart attack and died two days later."

Our government is ensuring that the very specific needs of people in this province can be addressed. That's why we are expanding the cardiac system. That's why we are constructing three additional cardiac centres throughout this province. That's why we are providing more cardiac surgery than ever before. We will continue to do this, because we have a plan that will ensure that the needs of people can be addressed.

Mr Kennedy: What you're saying is that the system didn't work at one point in 1979, and since then you've cut 70 intensive care beds out, 2,000 hospital beds. You took them away from a system you said wasn't working 10 years ago.

Minister, here's what people think of what you're saying. Scott McKendrick is a police officer. He's Mr Rodriguez's son-in-law. He and his wife Marisa say: "You live in a country where you believe that this could not happen, that the health system would not be there for you when you need it. What are you working for?" We're turning this province, according to Mr McKendrick, into the United States.

Mr Rodriguez's wife had to get on a bus and go to Kingston to visit her husband, because there wasn't a

single ICU bed available in the whole greater Toronto area, and you cut 70 beds.

Minister, you stripped down the health care system. Mr McKendrick has a response to you for that: He used to be a Conservative; he is not any more.

Will you at least have the decency to stand up today and apologize to the Rodriguez and McKendrick families and put back the ICU beds you cut?

Hon Mrs Witmer: Perhaps the member isn't aware of the fact that we are expanding the health system. Let me remind him as to what's happening. In the city of Toronto, six of the emergency rooms are being expanded to meet the specific needs of people in this province. In fact, the space in the emergency rooms is being expanded by 15%. There will be an additional 500,000 visits made available to people in this province. We are ensuring that we can provide for the needs of patients throughout this province. We have provided 23,000 new cardiac procedures since 1995, a 50% increase over what was done before. We are expanding services, whether it's cancer, cardiac, dialysis, or the number of MRIs from 12 to 35. We are providing long-term-care services which your government and the other government —

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mrs Witmer: — didn't provide for over 20 years. We are making community care services available for people throughout this province.

We are making the tough decisions —

The Speaker: New question, official opposition.

1430

HOME CARE

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): My question is for the Minister of Long-Term Care. Minister, last August the Essex county Liberal MPPs asked you to reveal an internal financial audit on home care in Essex county. We asked you last August. We didn't get it. We asked you in a personal meeting of October 1 and you promised we would have it in two weeks. That was over six months ago.

Is there a reason why you are not releasing a financial audit? We believe that it will implicate your ministry to show us that in home care we have no provincial standards of care, you have inappropriate guidelines of care, and you are seriously lacking in policy and guidelines which these home care organizations will follow. Why, after six months, have you still refused my freedom-of-information request to have that financial audit?

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors): First of all, I'd like to advise the member opposite that no minister in any government can interfere with a freedom-of-information request. These requests follow legally and logically in accordance with the legislation.

Mrs Pupatello: Answer the question, Minister.

Hon Mr Jackson: The member has interjections. The Windsor-Essex CCAC audit is not a secret, and I'm very willing to share that information with the member

opposite. We also have to respect the privacy legislation and the rights of individuals both who work in the city of Windsor and who are providing care to the residents of your own community. Therefore, this information will be released in accordance with the legislation, a piece of legislation, I might add, which was unanimously passed in this Legislature in a previous government.

Mrs Pupatello: Minister, here's the financial audit that you refused to give us. Is this the reason why you did not want this document public, because every one of the six major observations of the auditors implicated your ministry for inadequate policies and guidelines, every single one of them?

The document indicates that it's your ministry that lacks accountability in terms of the spending of dollars in home care, so that in July of last year, when Alice Siddall, at age 93, died at home with inappropriate home care, you are responsible. Your lack of policies and standards in home care created that mess for the Siddall family, and now you refuse to stand up and take responsibility. Minister, it's in black and white now. I want to know what you are doing to improve home care for families like Alice Siddall's.

Hon Mr Jackson: I'm disappointed to hear the member opposite suggesting that the nurses in the Windsor area are responsible for the death of this individual. I think that is a most offensive and inappropriate suggestion on the part of the member opposite. We have very highly professional, very dedicated community representatives in the Windsor CCAC.

This government has expanded community based care in this province by some 54% in just three and a half short years. We are leading all other jurisdictions in this country for access to community based care. That has been expanded all across this province, including the Windsor area.

The member opposite condemns the activities of the Windsor CCAC. I want to remind her that four years ago, you campaigned in the last election not on expanding home care in this province. In fact, all the red book said that was you were going to get a committee —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Final supplementary.

Mrs Pupatello: Let me read from your audit, Minister, your accountability. It says, "The long-term-care division did not fulfill its accountability role and this has resulted in the questionable use of resources."

Let me continue to read from the report. You need to improve the accountability, "ensure full accountability over the funds." We would never accuse the local professionals and the work they do. It's your policies and guidelines that are inadequate. What that means is that the families who deserve care, deserve more visits, deserve supplies, deserve appropriate guidelines did not get them under your ministry. That is your bailiwick. You created it and you are responsible today.

I want to know, given this report, what are you going to do to ensure appropriate home care for the sick and the elderly not just in Windsor, but the ones cut off in North

York, the ones cut off in Kingston and right across Ontario?

Hon Mr Jackson: This government is very proud of the community care access centre system that has been built in this province. In fact, Windsor was the very first CCAC to open in Ontario.

Having examined all the matters that have been raised with respect to the additional funding that's gone into the Windsor area, I can stand here with great assurance for the member opposite that the additional monies that the Mike Harris government invested in the Windsor area went directly to patient care and they have improved the quality of those residents' lives, because this government is committed to expanding long-term care, something you'd still be studying if the province of Ontario had elected you as a government four years ago. We're investing more money for more people in Windsor and every corner of this province.

TAXATION

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): My question is to the Acting Premier. I'm not sure exactly who that is today, but in the absence of the Premier and the Deputy Premier, Minister, four years ago you were elected on a combined promise of tax cuts and a promise to maintain or enhance funding in education and health care. Four years later, Ontarians know that that didn't turn out to be true. You certainly cut the taxes, which benefited largely people of higher income. People have seen cuts in services, to education and health care and many other services.

Today, as you unveil your platform for the next election campaign, you are essentially promising more of the same. We note with interest that you're now promising the same thing that Ontarians know has not worked. The Liberals are promising essentially the same thing: to maintain the tax cut and to also put money back into health care and education.

My question to you is this: You fooled people four years ago. Do you really think, based on the experience of the last four years, you can fool Ontarians one more time?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I can understand why the member from the third party is in the third party position. I'm not sure where you are getting your information from, but if you look around Ontario, Ontario is once again back leading Canada.

You're right: We cut taxes, and that created a strong economy, which created jobs. We're right on track for that. It takes a strong economy to provide for the extra funding that we've given to health care despite the federal Liberals' cuts to health care. We've strengthened those services and strengthened education with a number of quality initiatives, and now for the first time an equitable funding formula that treats children, whether

they're in Red Lake or in Rosedale, the same for a quality education. That's something we can all be proud of.

Ontario is back on track, and with today's platform we're going to show the strong leadership and the strong platform that will lead Ontario into the next century on a sound footing and lead Canada.

Mr Silipo: Let me tell this minister and his government where we get the information. We get it from talking to people every day. We get it from seeing that people are paying higher property taxes. Interestingly enough, even a group like the Fraser Institute points out that property taxes have increased on average 16% between 1995 and 1998. We get it from seeing increases in tuition fees. We get it from seeing exactly the impact of the cuts in the many services that Ontarians have come to know and that you have slashed in order to find the money for the 30% income tax cut. We know that the same is going to happen if you proceed with the 20% income tax cut, if people buy into that in the next election.

We also note with interest that as we look at your platform, the closest thing we can find to user fees — remember user fees? Those were the things that your Premier used to call another tax, a tax by another name. All of a sudden in your platform today there's very little mention of fees. You talk about them as if they don't exist any more.

My question to you again is this: Why have you forgotten the old concept that in fact user fees that are increasing all over the province are simply a tax by another name?

1440

Hon Mr Hodgson: The member has a point that the federal government and the Liberals believe in higher taxes. But let's take a look at your failed policies that led to \$11 billion in debt every year that was being accumulated to almost \$100 billion in debt. You almost drove this province to the brink of bankruptcy. Your record on job creation was negative 10,000. There were 10,000 less jobs at the end of your time than at the beginning. Those failed policies are what your party is now advocating you want to return to.

What I suggest is that the doom and gloom brothers get out from the backrooms of the union leadership in trying to curry their support and talk to real working Ontarians, who realize that a strong economy means we have the dollars to provide for priority services such as quality health care and quality education. It's only through a strong economy that you get that and it's only through strong leadership that you keep it.

I would encourage every Ontarian to read today's platform.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I'll remind all members that there are no props, not just the government side but on the opposition as well.

Mr Silipo: Speaker, that's exactly why I didn't come in here waving our green booklet, which sets out very clearly the position that we are taking very proudly into the next campaign, in which we say to people that the

devastation that has been caused by the Mike Harris government, the cuts to health care, the cuts to education, need to be reversed. Ontarians need to know that money can come from a real source, not from somewhere out in blue sky or red sky, but from a real source. That's why recouping and stopping the tax cut for people with a taxable income over \$80,000 is the most sensible, detailed and accurate thing to do.

We'll be quite proud to debate that. We'll be quite proud to talk to people about why we took the courageous decisions we did when we were in government, unlike what you are doing, which is simply to push the responsibilities down to the local level.

We're looking forward to this campaign. The only thing we need is simply the election call. Stop this pretence that we still need a legislative session to do no-matter-what. You've put out the platform; let's get on with it.

I want to ask you again: Do you really think you're going to be able to fool Ontarians another time, given the experience of the last four years?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'm glad to see that the member has read our platform and concurs that a strong economy provides for essential services like quality health care and quality education. We're looking forward to the chance to debate our respective platforms. When you compare that to Dalton McGuinty's collection of spending promises to every special interest group he's run across in the last year and a half, I think it's going to be an interesting debate and a good choice for Ontarians, who I think will choose a strong economy and a strong leader for a progressive plan to lead us into the next century.

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My question is to the Minister of Health. In the wake of the deadly shootings in Colorado and Alberta, it is really important that we listen to the voices of the experts here in our province in the area of children's mental health. We listen to them and hear them say that in fact there is a crisis. There are over 7,000 children and youth who are on waiting lists. They're desperate for services. Their parents have identified the warning signs and they're trying to get the help they need. They're begging for that help, but the system is overloaded and can't respond.

During the review your government conducted, I know you heard and your colleague ministers in Comsoc and children's issues heard over and over again that there's an investment of \$200 million needed for the necessary services. But I also know that the experts told you that they need an immediate \$20 million to establish crisis response capacity in communities, a crisis response that would help to avoid the horrible acts of violence by troubled teens that we've seen in other jurisdictions.

Minister, will you commit \$20 million to establish this crisis response capacity in our communities, or is it more important to give wealthy Ontarians another tax cut?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I'll refer that to the minister with responsibility for mental health for children.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): The member across the way is quite right that children's mental health services for many years has been badly in need of change and reform so that we can better meet the needs of those families. That's why we've taken significant steps to try and start doing that reform process so that those services are there when those families need them. Unfortunately, in the past what has happened, as the member said, is that when those families needed help it hasn't been there for them. So through initiatives like Making Services Work for People, which is a community-based planning process, we are trying to make sure that those services are there.

Because of the increased revenues that this government has brought in, we've been able to increase resources in certain targeted areas; for example, the child protection sector, which is a very important support for children's mental health as well.

Ms Lankin: Minister, I would like to read to you the definition of a mental health crisis: "A crisis involves the sudden breakdown of an individual's ability to cope resulting, in a desperate situation which is likely to worsen without immediate intervention. Often, the individual is at risk of harming himself or herself or others."

The Association of Children's Mental Health Centres is telling us that the vast majority of communities in this province do not have the necessary resources to provide an effective response to children in crisis, to help families stabilize their children and prevent the problem from escalating.

Minister, do you agree that we need urgently to establish crisis response capacity in communities? Do you agree that \$20 million is a very small amount to make kids' lives safe? Do you agree that it's more important than further tax cuts for Ontario's wealthy?

Hon Mrs Ecker: With all due respect to the honourable member, if we didn't think that there needed to be an improvement in those children's mental health services, we wouldn't have launched Making Services Work for People, we wouldn't have had Minister Marland doing the consultation she's been doing with all of the organizations and the families to see how we can better improve those services, because we understand that those families need those services.

I would also like to remind the honourable member over there that in order to have those services that families need, we need the economic growth, we need the prosperity, because that's how we build those social services that are so important for us. She likes to dump on the tax cuts. To those 655,000 low-income families that don't have to pay another Ontario income tax dollar, that is a benefit, that helps to create jobs, that generates the growth that allows us to increase money in these social services that are so important to families.

Ms Lankin: Let me remind the minister over there, to use her own words, that there are over 7,000 children and youth on the waiting list right now in the province, and your long-term review and long-term solutions are not going to fix that problem right now. These are kids who are sad, who are angry, who are depressed, who are anxious, who are hyperactive and sometimes who are violent. They are acting out in classrooms, they are overburdening teachers, they are causing families stress, and families are barely being able to hold it together to meet the needs of their children.

We're asking you to give an immediate response. The longer-term problem will still be there and we will all work together on that, but they have asked you urgently for \$20 million to establish the crisis response capacity in communities so they can move in, in an immediate way, and intervene when there are situations. Who knows when the next troubled teen is going to turn to violence to try and solve their troubled state?

Minister, think about this: \$20 million. You can make a difference. You have a budget coming next week. We are asking you to make a downpayment on kids' safety, to do something that could save kids' lives, an immediate action in this province. I'm asking you to say that that is more important than tax cuts for the wealthiest in this province.

Hon Mrs Ecker: Children's mental health is a very important service in this province. As I said, that's why we've made some of the changes in my ministry. Where we've been able to increase resources in key priority areas, we have done so. We will continue to do that as the growth in this economy allows us to afford and invest in those services so we can expand those services.

We've made significant changes. We're going to continue to do that. I look forward to the recommendations from my colleague Minister Marland. She's heard a lot of very good suggestions and recommendations from the organizations and the families. We will be acting on those because we know how important this needs to be for those families out there.

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): My question is for the Minister of Health and follows up on an issue I've raised with her before. She will be aware that there was a young lady in the area I represent who went to the hospital. She was 30 weeks pregnant, had a brain hemorrhage. The hospital desperately tried to get neurosurgery in the surrounding hospitals, made 21 phone calls, and couldn't. The closest hospital that could do it was in Hamilton. They phoned the air ambulance. It wasn't available and they transported her by land. Tragically, they were able to save the baby, but she died.

There's going to be an inquest, as you know, starting May 31.

My question is the same one that I sent two letters to you on, and that is, what have you done to ensure that this never happens to any other person in Ontario?

1450

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): As the member knows, an inquest is pending, and obviously the appropriate steps have been taken by the ministry. Certainly on any recommendations coming from the inquest there will be full co-operation from the Ministry of Health.

Mr Phillips: The problem for me and for others is that this individual, tragically, died. Most who have looked at the case say it was a tragedy that could have been avoided. The reason I sent you the letter some months ago, and then followed up again, was to make certain that steps had been taken to make sure that she didn't die in vain, that no one else would face the same consequences.

With all due respect, awaiting an inquest to take steps to fix the problem is inappropriate. I think you need to stand and tell the people of Ontario that you have examined this case and that you have taken appropriate steps to make certain, as I say, that no other person needs to die under similar circumstances. That's simply the question that I posed to you in two letters and I'd like to pose again to you: What steps have you taken to ensure that this does not happen again?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As I have already indicated, Ministry of Health staff always take the appropriate steps and certainly will co-operate with the inquest and will take any further steps that are necessary.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY OFFICE

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I have a question for the Attorney General. This morning, the Ombudsman released her report on her second investigation of your Family Responsibility Office. She said the following: "From the evidence gathered in the investigation, it is clear that the FRO remains far from stabilized. In its third year of operation, the FRO is still failing to fulfill its mandate through timely and effective enforcement of its caseload."

The reason why, Minister, is that you and your government have failed to provide the money necessary so the FRO can hire the staff needed to get the job done. In fact, the Ombudsman said, "I believe the ministry has failed to discharge this responsibility, and as a result the FRO is not in a position to carry out its mandate." Can you explain why your Conservative government has money to give the wealthiest Ontarians a 30% tax break but no money to hire staff at the FRO so families can get the support payments they're entitled to?

Hon Charles Harnick (Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs): I'm really sorry that the Ombudsman is unhappy that we now spend \$5 million more than has ever been spent on a Family Responsibility Office in this province before. I'm really sorry that the Ombudsman doesn't seem to realize that we collected 37% more in March of this year than we collected in March 1995. I'm really sorry that the Ombudsman is disappointed that we've collected \$135 million more for women and children this year than has ever been

collected by the Family Responsibility Office before. I'm sorry that the Ombudsman is disappointed that we answered 2,800 phone calls in one day last week with a 7.7-minute response time. I'm sorry that the Ombudsman is disappointed that all monies are distributed within 24 to 48 hours.

I can go on, but I'll wait for the supplementary.

Ms Martel: Minister, I'm really sorry that you continue to fail to recognize your responsibility for the crisis at the Family Responsibility Office, a crisis that you created in 1996 because it was more important for you to take money out of the Family Responsibility Office to finance your tax cut than it was to ensure that families would continue to get the support they're owed. I'm sorry that you continue to fail, after three years, to accept your responsibility for the job you're supposed to be doing.

The Ombudsman, who is independent, whose judgment I trust far more than yours, sir, said the following: "The Ministry of the Attorney General should urgently address the continuing omission of the Family Responsibility Office to fulfill its mandate, and the ministry should take all necessary steps to ensure that the Family Responsibility Office is able to enforce support orders in a timely and effective manner, including providing it with the capability and resources to fulfill its mandate."

Explain to families in Ontario why it's more important for your government to give a 30% tax cut to the wealthiest Ontarians than it is to ensure that families get the support payments they're owed.

Hon Mr Harnick: Explain to me why, if this is the report of the Ombudsman, one week ago she gave the Family Responsibility Office an award for service delivery.

I'm really sorry she's upset that we've now reported 76,400 people to credit bureaus who are not paying their child support. I'm really sorry she's not happy with the fact that we now suspend drivers' licences and we've collected 10 million additional dollars, something the NDP wouldn't do when they were the government because they liked to put the files in the bottom drawer and not deal with them. I'm really disappointed that we now send 20,000 files that they had in file cabinets, hidden in drawers, out to collection agencies to collect money.

I tell you, the Ombudsman's report isn't worth the paper it's written on.

TRUCKING SAFETY

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): My question is addressed to the Minister of Transportation. Over the last four years your ministry has made several changes to improve truck safety and the people of Ontario are very appreciative of those changes. I understand that recently you have also made some new changes to improve and strengthen the written tests for truck drivers. Minister, could you please update the House on some of those changes.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation): I'm always pleased to talk about this government's record on truck safety. I thank the honourable member for Northumberland for his question.

I should report to this House that effective Monday, April 26, the Ministry of Transportation has fully implemented a new class A written test for truck drivers. This was via consultation with the industry and the truck driver training community. We have developed a tougher and more comprehensive class A written test as part of our commitment to improve both truck safety and road safety.

The tougher test will apply to approximately 34,000 people who take the class A written test every year. It will be phased in and it will cover commercial vehicle operator's registration, weight and dimensions, inspection and maintenance, hours of service, defensive driving and general rules.

1500

I should say that this is in conjunction with several other measures that we have already implemented involving truck impoundment, absolute liability for wheel-offs, higher fines for safety violations and 24 by 7 truck inspection stations.

Mr Galt: Thank you for that update. I also understand that Ontario is moving to implement a carrier safety rating program by issuing a public label to all operators of commercial vehicles. Could you please update us on how you're progressing with this particular move on truck safety?

Hon Mr Clement: With your permission, Mr Speaker, I'd be happy to update the House on the implementation of the carrier safety rating system.

In 1999, this year, we will be providing an objective evaluation of the overall safety performances of truck and bus operators to encourage investment in commercial vehicle safety and to reduce those fatalities on Ontario's roads. The rating that is issued by my ministry will be based on the operator's safety record and will assist the shipping community in selecting those safe carriers.

These carriers will be given one of five ratings: unsatisfactory, conditional, satisfactory, satisfactory un-audited or excellent. If you have an unsatisfactory rating, that means the carrier's operating privileges in Ontario have been suspended or cancelled.

We are already beginning an education and awareness program on the carrier safety rating system through updates on our web site, presentations to the trucking associations and trade organizations and individual letters. I am pleased to say that we are harmonizing with other advantages and other implementations that are going on throughout Canada, and that will make our roads safer.

TUITION FEES

Mr David Caplan (Oriole): My question is to the Minister of Education and Training. You said on October 15 that you would be personally involved in reviewing

the quality improvement plans for our universities. It has now been six months since you made that statement in the House and I think our medical students at the University of Western Ontario deserve an update.

Can you report to this House on the reinvestment that the University of Western Ontario has made to its medical school and how you've addressed the fact that none of the additional revenue collected from students has gone back to improving their education? In fact, the base budget for medicine for the University of Western Ontario has been increased less than 1%, while tuition fees have increased 250% since 1995.

Minister, you said you would get personally involved. Obviously it's another broken promise. Obviously students can't take you at your word. You've failed our post-secondary students, you've failed their families. Tell us today what you're going to do to rectify the situation.

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I'm happy to report that the post-secondary institutions have quality improvement plans.

Mr Caplan: Did you review them?

Hon David Johnson: I have personally reviewed the plans and I think it was a good first effort. We are the first government that has required the post-secondary institutions to have such a plan because the students are rightfully interested in the financial implications of their post-secondary education, but even more so, they're interested in quality. That's what this government, the first government, is trying to establish: quality.

We've done that through a number of ways, such as the access to opportunities program; investment in the key performance indicators; assisting students through the student opportunity trust fund, some 185,000 students over the next 10 years through the 30% set-aside; 45,000 students already assisted in Ontario.

Mr Caplan: Platitudes from this minister don't fool anybody. The board of governors at Western not only overruled a Senate recommendation to freeze fees for three years but they refused to hear from the dean of medicine, Dr Robert McMurtry. They did that, Minister, because, like you, they didn't want to hear Dr McMurtry's real fears about accessibility to the program. They refused to hear the results of a study of the first-year class that showed that because of your higher tuition increases, first-year students are now from a wealthier economic background.

Minister, when did you decide that it's the size of your parent's wallet that determines whether or not you can go to medical school? You said you'd be personally involved in ensuring the money went back into the program and that students could gain access. When are you going to actually act like a minister who cares about accessibility? Tell the students what you're going to do. The first-year class at medical school at the University of Western Ontario is paying double the fees and they have the same education, and you're doing nothing about it.

Hon David Johnson: It's interesting through all this bluster that the actual fact of the situation is that we have more post-secondary students today than ever before in

Ontario; there are more students participating in post-secondary education in our universities and colleges.

Because there are investments that are required, investments in terms of increasing enrolment, investments for renewing our facilities, the question is going to be, which party can fund those investments that are required? I can say that the government's approach will be through strong leadership to grow the economy, to raise the funds that are required for the investment.

We know that the Liberal Party has a different approach for education. Their approach, for example, is to put \$1.3 billion on the backs of property taxpayers. That's what the Liberal Party supports —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): New question, third party.

CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. Earlier this week you made a statement in the House where you said that your new funding formula for children's aid societies will "support rational planning and effective management."

Earlier this month the Toronto Catholic Children's Aid Society announced the closing of a program that helps troubled teens at home, Reconnecting Youth. It was cancelled after five effective years because the society does not know how much money it's getting from the province or what it can be used for.

Here we are one month into the second year of your new funding formula and that CAS and all of its sister agencies don't know what their budgets are. None of them can do rational planning or effective management.

Let me read to you from an April 8 letter from Mary McConville to you, "Boards of directors are extremely anxious about operating without an approved budget, especially at a time when" your ministry "is about to implement a zero-based budgeting approach and service demands are very high." She says that since the implementation of the funding formula began, communications from your ministry have "slowed to a trickle and there are no open discussions."

Minister, wealthy Ontarians know when they're getting tax breaks. When are children's aid societies going to know what budgets they have and what they can spend the money on?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): The honourable member knows that children's aid societies have for many years needed a funding formula that was not as difficult to deal with as the old contingency formula they had before. What we have done is we've consulted with associations, we've listened to what they said about what was needed, and we are investing that money over three years — the process started last year — in a way that responds to the needs they've said are important, but not only what they want in the system but also what the coroners' juries have said was needed. We need better benchmarks, better

standards, better ways to measure caseload and workload, better ways to reduce the workload for front-line workers, and this formula will indeed do that.

We knew it was going to take some time to put it into place. We were prepared to take the time because where vulnerable children depend on it, this system is not something one wants to rush. We've been doing it in very close consultation with children's aid societies, as we should.

Ms Lankin: Mary McConville, the executive director of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, is not saying it's been in close consultation. She's saying that communications have "slowed to a trickle." The benchmarks aren't done, the standards aren't done, workloads have increased and they don't know what their budgets are.

I asked your ministry two months ago for a full briefing on the funding formula, how it works. I've had to ask your office a number of times and I've asked you twice. That information has still not been forthcoming.

Mary McConville also says: "Some agencies are being cash-flowed at 1998-99 approved budget levels; some at expenditure levels from" that year; "others at amounts close to full implementation of the funding framework. Several agencies have been given letters by area offices to support borrowing at the local bank against lines of credit in this first month" of this budget year.

Minister, the point is they don't know what their budgets are, so they can't determine what they're going to have to spend, and they don't know how the funding formula is going to restrict from one area to another, much like your botched education funding formula. They don't know what categories they can spend on. Programs like Reconnecting Youth and others across the province are being cancelled as a result of it. They need some clarity and some surety. When will they know what their budgets are and what they can spend the money on?

1510

Hon Mrs Ecker: I understand the nervousness, because we are going into a new framework, which has much more accountability, much more emphasis on benchmarks and standards. I understand that nervousness, and that's why as early as this week we had another meeting, my deputy and the children's aid association. We have had training sessions across the province for executive directors of agencies so they can be clear. I'd also like to remind the honourable member that one of the things we're trying to fix is this old contingency funding formula where they didn't know what their budget was going to be at the end of the year, because it was, "Go out and spend it, and then we'll figure out how to pay for it," which is not exactly a good way to be funding something as important as child protection services.

We've made a commitment to have \$170 million over three years. We are well on our way. We had the first phase of that money go in last year. The second phase is coming in this year. We know this is a transition year. We're working carefully with them to make sure this

formula will work to better support those front-line workers.

AUTOMOBILE INSURANCE

Mr Ernie Hardeman (Oxford): My question is to the Minister without Portfolio responsible for privatization, and also the government's lead on auto insurance. I'm pleased to note that today you introduced a bill designed to further enhance Ontario's automobile insurance system. While I know that the auto insurance premiums have decreased substantially since our reform in November 1996, I appreciate you are continuing to look for ways to improve the system, and this bill certainly is proof of that commitment.

I wonder if the minister could provide a little detail regarding the background to and the rationale behind the bill you tabled today.

Hon Rob Sampson (Minister without Portfolio [Privatization]): I want to thank the honourable member for the question. He's right. In fact, the auto insurance reform we implemented in 1996 is indeed doing well. As a testament to how well it's doing, rates have fallen year over year, month over month, quarter over quarter — these are the average rates paid by Ontarians — by up to almost 12%. That's a tremendous achievement of any government in any part of North America. It has happened because we have implemented some reforms which have made some sense in auto insurance, finally, which neither of the previous governments were prepared to do.

We also committed to Ontarians that we would review auto insurance legislation on a regular basis to make sure that the reforms we brought forward kept pace with the times. We've done that. I struck a committee just after we introduced the original bill and passed that bill to start the process of reviewing the auto insurance legislation over the next two years so they could bring forward reforms that made sense to us. Those reforms are captured in the bill I've tabled today and those reforms are captured in other regulations that I spoke to when we introduced those regulations and the reforms in November of last year.

Mr Hardeman: Thank you, Minister. I certainly appreciate your explanation and your determination to continue to improve the system. I wonder if you could elaborate on some of the particular provisions contained in the bill. In particular, I would be most interested in hearing how children will benefit from the government's planned auto insurance changes.

Hon Mr Sampson: I'm pleased to say that indeed the bill we've tabled today does recognize the special needs of children. Children are a different category of auto insurance consumers in this province. They don't drive themselves and they don't have the ability to make the decision on what particular insurance product to buy for their own protection. We've recognized this. Health care professionals have said to us that indeed in some cases when a child is involved in a serious accident involving

catastrophic injuries, it's very difficult to determine, given the nature of the injury and the nature of the child, whether the injury is indeed catastrophic. They've asked us to take a look and see whether there are ways in which we could expand the application of not only the statutory benefit schedules to children, as they relate to catastrophic injuries, but also expand their ability to access the health care system through the tort system —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.

Hon Mr Sampson: — to the court system, to be able to sue for excess health care benefits should they need to have them. Of course, if you're a catastrophically injured child —

The Speaker: New question.

HEALTH CARE

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): My question is for the Minister of Health. As you well know, Mike Harris promised he was not going to cut a cent from health care. He then cut \$870 million from hospital budgets, with more cuts yet to come. The result is people waiting for hospital beds in emergency rooms and waiting at home for desperately needed surgery.

Earlier this week we raised the case of a woman in Thunder Bay who chose to have a double mastectomy as an outpatient because she was not prepared to wait for a surgical bed. This is what health care has become in Mike Harris's Ontario, women having to make a choice between waiting for life-saving surgery or having a double mastectomy done as an outpatient. Do you believe, Minister, that women with breast cancer should have to choose between having a double mastectomy as an outpatient or waiting for the surgery they need?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): The member is well aware that there has been a lot of dialogue on this particular issue. Again, I want to point out that Ministry of Health officials have received information that indicates that in this particular situation it was not a case of a lack of resources, and any decisions that were made were clinical decisions that were made by a physician.

Mrs McLeod: The fact is that Mike Harris cut the funding for hospitals; he cut the funding for the Thunder Bay Regional Hospital. The Thunder Bay Regional Hospital has had to shut down beds, it's had to lay off nurses, we have shortages of physicians, and patients are waiting too long for treatment.

Another Thunder Bay woman is making a different choice from the one we raised earlier this week. This woman has breast cancer and she will have her surgery in hospital on May 12. It has taken two months from the time she noticed a lump in her breast until she can have the surgery that she needs.

I want to tell you what this woman is saying. She says: "I'm a breast cancer patient who has had to wait almost two months from the time I found the lump in my breast to the time a surgeon could take it out. The anxiety and worry is almost too much as I wonder every night how

much more damage is being done to my system while I wait for treatment."

Minister, do you consider a two-month wait, from the time a lump is detected until this woman can have needed treatment, to be acceptable? I ask you, why would this woman or any other woman with breast cancer trust Mike Harris on health care?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member knows, we have indicated that we are doing everything we can to ensure that women who have breast cancer are diagnosed as quickly as possible. We have invested \$23 million, and as a result of the capacity now to make an early diagnosis through breast cancer screening, we know that in women between the ages of 50 to 69 it will decrease the incidence of death by one third. We are certainly moving forward. We recognize the need to diagnose quickly and to provide treatment, and we are investing additional money throughout the province to assist women with the screening and with treatment.

If I take a look at Thunder Bay, actually spending in Thunder Bay has increased by over \$51 million since 1995.

ADOPTION DISCLOSURE

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): My question is to the Minister of Community and Social Services. The Ombudsman today issued a follow-up report to a report from 1998 which said that the adoption disclosure registry has a backlog of over 16,000, waiting up to 7.25 years to have a search conducted. In fact, we know it's longer than that. Nevertheless, the report today says that while the number of registrants has been reduced as new applicants decline, applicants are still having to wait as long as in the past or even longer, and there has been no significant progress in addressing this backlog.

Minister, you have repeatedly said in this House and to the press when asked questions about this disclosure system that you were improving it, that the backlog has been reduced. Clearly, that is not the case. This is unacceptable. Why is it OK with you to give a huge tax cut to the wealthy in this province and leave thousands of people in agony, searching for birth relatives? Will you answer that question, and will you do something about this backlog?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): To the honourable member, who I know has been very intimately involved in the issue of adoption disclosure, we quite recognize that the backlog for those seeking birth relatives, parents and family connections is very, very big, and it shouldn't be there. That's why we have taken the steps we have to try and start getting that down to an acceptable service level. For example, we're putting \$350,000 more in resources into the system. We are also speeding it up through working with other parent finder groups, for example, the use of technology, sharing information and databases that the Ontario government has.

I'd like to say to the honourable member that voluntary matches, where both parties have registered, are up to date. The other thing that we make very sure of is that medical and urgent needs for that information have the top priority in the search.

1520

Ms Churley: It seems to me from that answer that the minister is doing nothing about adoption disclosure reform, which in fact she promised the adoption community she would do when she changed the Child and Family Services Act.

I had a private member's bill, Bill 88, passed in this House with a vote of 57 to 3. There is a huge consensus across this province to move forward on adoption disclosure. While people are twisting in the wind and waiting for information, older birth parents are dying. People are having health problems and people are living in actual agony trying to find each other.

Minister, you know this. It is not complicated. My bill has consensus across the province. Will you commit today to allow quick passage in this House, before the session ends, of Bill 88, so we can get on with adoption disclosure in this province?

Hon Mrs Ecker: I had said that when we got the amendments passed to strengthen the child protection system — that was our first priority — once that piece of work had been done, we wanted to go to adoption disclosure.

Ms Churley: The work is already done, Janet. That's bull.

Hon Mrs Ecker: With all due respect to the honourable member, if she would stop shouting at me she might hear the answer.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. Member for Riverdale, you must withdraw that comment.

Ms Churley: I withdraw that comment.

The Speaker: Minister.

Hon Mrs Ecker: We wanted first to get the work on strengthening the child protection system and do that. Of course, that was not able to have been passed last fall so we want to get that done during this session. That is the priority. But I would like to remind the honourable member that we know that the backlog is unacceptable. That's why we are investing \$350,000 this year. Maybe the NDP thinks \$350,000 is insignificant, but I think it's a significant investment. They didn't do it when they were there, so I have some difficulty accepting the criticism from across the way.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): My question is for the Minister of Municipal Affairs. On the subject of rent controls and further to his questioning of you earlier this week on this issue, my heart went out to the member for York South, because I think in his questioning he demonstrated some misunderstanding of the changes of legislation this House committed to several years ago. I wonder if you would be good enough

to refresh the members of this House on the changes you have made, and this House has approved, to the Rent Control Act and the Tenant Protection Act and if you would also remind the House of what measures have been put in place to protect tenants from harassment and from poorly maintained buildings.

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): First of all, before I respond to the question, I'd like to extend my congratulations and thanks to the member from High Park for the fine work he has done over the past four years in this House.

Following that, I would like to clarify the misinformation that was distributed last week by the ambulance chaser from York South.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: The minister stated that the other member had given misinformation. Surely that's unparliamentary.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I did hear the word "misinformation," but I don't know who he was talking about. It was very difficult to hear.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Hold it, that's your conclusion.

Interjection.

The Speaker: Member for Kingston and The Islands, that's your conclusion. I can't draw the same conclusion. If the minister said something inappropriate, I'm sure he will withdraw it.

Hon Mr Leach: Well, Mr Speaker, if "misinformation" is inappropriate, I will withdraw that and just say the unfactual information that was put, or non-factual, whatever — pick a word for me —

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): Pseudo-factual.

Hon Mr Leach: — from the member for York South, because I think everybody knows that the Tenant Protection Act that has been put in by this government is far superior to that which was in place by the legislation that was put in by the Liberal government.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I seek unanimous consent to revert to motions to move a further motion with respect to the Monday sitting of the standing committee on regulations and private bills.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

MOTIONS

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that standing order 86 respecting notice of committee hearings be suspended for consideration of Bills Pr1, Pr4, Pr7 and

Pr8 by the standing committee on regulations and private bills on Monday, May 3, 1999.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Agreed? Agreed.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I have the weekly business statement, pursuant to standing order 55, which I wish to indicate for the remaining part of this afternoon and next week.

This afternoon we'll be dealing with second and third reading of the Loan and Trust Corporations Act and hopefully the second and third reading of Bill 8, which is the vintners act.

On Monday afternoon, there will be an NDP opposition day. In the evening, as we agreed before, we'll be dealing with Bill 6, the Child and Family Services Amendment Act.

On Tuesday afternoon, the budget will be at 4 pm, and in the evening, at 6:30 pm, we'll be dealing with Bill 17, Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act.

On Wednesday, May 5, in the afternoon, we'll be having budget debate.

On Thursday morning, May 6, we'll be having private members' public business. Ballot item number 1 is Mr Shea's, ballot item number 2 is Mr Cordiano's. In the afternoon, we'll be having budget debate as well.

PETITIONS

SENIORS' HEALTH SERVICES

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas seniors in our community owe it to you, Premier, that our health and drug conditions have, over the last few years, been getting worse;

"We call on you to help us regain our faith in the health care system;

"We call on you to make available for us more drugs and more affordable drugs;

"With all your cuts and user fees, we have to choose which prescription we can afford;

"We are frail and in need of continuous care and medical assistance;

"Without proper help, we feel helpless;

"Your deep cuts to our health care system are taking a heavy toll;

"We call on you, Premier, to respond and assist with fair and just funding."

I agree and I will affix my signature.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 120 people from various places across the province.

"Whereas children are exposed to pornography in variety stores and video retail outlets;

"Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to pornography;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To enact legislation which will create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to pornography in retail establishments; prevent minors from entering establishments which sell or rent pornography; restrict the location of such establishments to non-residential areas."

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This petition reads as follows:

"To the government of Ontario:

"Whereas the major oil companies in Ontario have had a free rein to gouge consumers by raising prices together at the same time and by as much as 30 cents per gallon; and

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris has taken no meaningful actions to protect consumers from the practice of rising retail gas prices immediately before long weekends; and

"Whereas the Premier has refused to call the captains of the oil industry to account for uncompetitive pricing practices; and

"Whereas the provincial government has within its power and jurisdiction the power to take action against uncompetitive pricing policies by the big oil companies;

"Be it therefore resolved that the members of the Legislative Assembly support and pass quickly the predatory pricing bill introduced by the MPP for St Catharines to ensure that independent retailers are not driven out of business by the pricing practices of the major oil companies."

I affix my signature. I'm in full agreement.

1530

OSTEOPOROSIS

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): I have petition to the Legislature of Ontario signed by more than 100 constituents. I'd like to read it.

"I believe that the women of Ontario should have access to the highest quality health care. As osteoporosis is a significant women's health issue, it must be managed effectively. As such, I believe that all women in Ontario should have access to appropriate diagnosis and treatment of osteoporosis. I urge the Ontario government to provide women with immediate government-funded

access to proven, effective drug therapies appropriate for the prevention and treatment of osteoporosis, thus ensuring a range of drug therapies are available on the provincial formulary."

I affix my signature.

RENT REGULATION

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I have a petition here that reads like this:

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has passed Bill 96 legislation which killed rent control in the province of Ontario; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris campaign literature during the York South by-election stated that rent control will continue; and

"Whereas tenant groups, students and seniors have pointed out that this legislation will hurt those who can least afford it, as it will cause higher rents across most markets in Ontario; and

"Whereas Mike Harris's proposal will make it easier for residents to be evicted from retirement care homes; and

"Whereas the Liberal caucus continues to believe that all tenants, and particularly the vulnerable in our society who live on fixed incomes, deserve the assurance of a maximum rent cap;

"We, the undersigned, demand that the Mike Harris government scrap the proposal to abandon and eliminate rent control and introduce legislation which will protect tenants in the province of Ontario."

I'll affix my signature. I'm in total agreement with this.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr John L. Parker (York East): I have here a petition signed by a large number of Ontario residents. It's addressed to the Legislature of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas this government has undertaken to reform the system of education funding to ensure fair funding for Ontario's children; and

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has stated that the province could, if it so chose, pass legislation extending funding to denominational schools other than Roman Catholic schools without infringing the rights guaranteed to Roman Catholic separate schools; and

"Whereas providing our children with an excellent education consistent with our cultural and religious beliefs is a necessity and not a matter of preference; and

"Whereas independent schools successfully educate children across the entire spectrum of learning abilities and special needs; and

"Whereas all children of taxpaying Ontario parents deserve to have funding distributed in a manner that does not discriminate against those not using the public or Catholic systems;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, respectfully request that the government take immediate steps to extend fair funding to all students of the province."

EDUCATION FACILITIES

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I have a further petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, dealing with portables and lack of quality buildings for education in my area. It reads:

"Whereas we, the undersigned residents of the Jane-Steeles-Finch area, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario on the following:

"Our elementary school is no longer safe or healthy due to too many portables with mould, extremely poorly kept conditions and beyond the stage of reasonable repair. This government's cuts in funding mean that our kids will have to continue to go to these portables for years to come. We believe the education of our children is adversely affected, as our board will have to decide to cut out more teachers or on school books.

We ask the Minister of Education and the Premier of Ontario to keep their promise and fund our schools fairly and equitably."

I concur with the content of the petitioners here. I think they are quite right in what they are saying and I'm affixing my signature to it as well.

WOLF POPULATION

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): I have a petition to the Legislature of Ontario:

"Whereas currently any wolf leaving the boundary of Algonquin Park can be killed at will;

"Whereas such unrestrained killing is having dramatic negative effects on an already small wolf population in the park;

"Whereas such practices are unlikely to be sustainable for the future integrity of the Algonquin wolf; and

"Whereas research shows that the Algonquin wolf is a previously unknown, separate species in its own right;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario as follows:

"To immediately legislate, monitor and enforce a 10-kilometre no-kill zone around the entire boundary of Algonquin Provincial Park."

I affix my signature.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas essential public services have been deprived of government funding because the Conservative government of Mike Harris has diverted these funds to self-serving political propaganda in the form of pamphlets delivered to homes, newspaper advertisements and radio and TV commercials;

"Whereas the Harris government advertising blitz is a blatant abuse of public office and a shameful waste of taxpayers' dollars;

"Whereas the Harris Conservatives ran on a platform of eliminating what it referred to as government waste and unnecessary expenditures while it squanders over \$100 million on clearly partisan advertising;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government of Mike Harris to immediately end its abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising."

I affix my signature, as I'm in complete agreement with this particular petition.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I have a petition to present on behalf of my colleague from Victoria-Haliburton. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas children are exposed to pornography in various stores and video rental outlets;

"Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to pornography;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To enact legislation which will create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to pornography in retail establishments; prevent minors from entering establishments which rent or sell pornography; restrict the location of such establishments to non-residential areas."

To this petition of 132 people, I sign my name.

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): I have a petition here that reads:

"Whereas since Mike Harris took office consumers across Ontario have been gouged by large oil companies who have implemented unfair and dramatic increases in the price of gasoline; and

"Whereas this increase in the price of gasoline has outpaced the rate of inflation by a rate that is totally unacceptable to all consumers in this province because it is unfair and directly affects their ability to purchase other consumer goods; and

"Whereas Premier Mike Harris and ministers within the cabinet of this government while in opposition expressed grave concern for gas price gouging and asked the government of the day to take action; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government could take action under Ontario law and pass predatory gas price legislation which would protect consumers, but instead seems intent on looking after the interests of big oil companies;

"We, the undersigned, petition Premier Harris and the government of Ontario to eliminate gas price fixing and

prevent the oil companies from gouging the public on an essential and vital product.”

I'm in full agreement with this and I affix my signature to it.

VETERANS' PENSION

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario signed by hundreds of constituents.

“Whereas a great number of Canada's surviving war veterans are falling through gaping cracks in Canada's pension system; and

“Whereas it is a myth that all war veterans receive a service pension or a pension of any kind; and

“Whereas it is a myth that all war veterans are entitled to a VIP to let them remain in their home; and

“Whereas it was reported by the Department of Veteran Affairs that eight out of 10 war veterans who apply for a disability pension are rejected; and

“Whereas there is a Canada-wide consensus that war veterans, whose average age has now exceeded the average life expectancy in Canada, are reasonably entitled to receive a basic service pension to help them live the remainder of their lives in dignity and comfort;

“Therefore we, the undersigned, respectfully petition the House of Commons of Canada to create and pass legislation to create a basic service pension to be paid to each and every war veteran living in Canada in recognition for their service to the country and that the basic service pension legislation be presented to Parliament for consideration at the 1999 spring sitting.”

I affix my signature.

1540

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr David Caplan (Oriole): This is a petition concerning the closing of Woodbine Junior High School, causing severe impacts to the international language program for the Mandarin Heritage Community Group. It's titled:

“To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

“Whereas Mike Harris is cutting the heart out of many communities by forcing boards of education to close hundreds of neighbourhood and community schools across Ontario; and

“Whereas this massive number of school closures all at once will displace many children and put others on longer bus routes and close child care facilities;

“Whereas Mike Harris promised in 1995 not to cut classroom spending, but has already cut almost \$1 billion from our schools and has instituted a funding model that does not work for Toronto District School Board, resulting in the need to close schools;

“Whereas Mike Harris is pitting parent against parent and community against community in the fight to save local schools; and

“Whereas parents in Romney, Toronto, Ottawa, Stratford, Hamilton-Wentworth and many other communities are calling on the government to prevent the closing of so many of their schools;

“Whereas the closure of a school should be based on local decision-making and student population, with enough time to consider all options, not complicated formulas imposed by the province and aimed at quickly reducing educational funding;

“Whereas all of these actions by the provincial government will undermine the quality of public education;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature to call on Mike Harris to change his funding model to take into account local and regional considerations and to stop his headlong rush to institute changes that result in so many school closings.”

I agree wholeheartedly with this petition, and I will affix my signature to it.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 104 people from across the province.

“Whereas children are exposed to pornography in variety stores and video rental outlets;

“Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to pornography;

“We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

“To enact legislation which will create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to pornography in retail establishments; prevent minors from entering establishments which rent or sell pornography; restrict the location of such establishments to non-residential areas.”

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): We have a petition addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario which reads as follows:

“Whereas Mike Harris is cutting the heart out of many communities by closing hundreds of neighbourhood and community schools across Ontario; and

“Whereas this massive number of school closings all at once will displace many children and put others on longer bus routes;

“Whereas Mike Harris promised in 1995 not to cut classroom spending, but has already cut at least \$1 billion from our schools and is now closing many classrooms completely; and

“Whereas Mike Harris is pitting parent against parent and community against community in the fight to save local schools; and

“Whereas parents and students in the city of Toronto and many other communities across Ontario are calling on the government to stop closing so many of their schools;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"Demand that Mike Harris stop closing local schools."

I concur, and I will affix my signature to it.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

LOAN AND TRUST CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SOCIÉTÉS DE PRÊT ET DE FIDUCIE

Mr Young, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend the Loan and Trust Corporations Act / Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés de prêt et de fiducie.

Mr Terence H. Young (Halton Centre): It's a pleasure to speak on second reading of Bill 3, the Loan and Trust Corporations Amendment Act, 1999. If passed, this bill would amend the Loan and Trust Corporations Act and would extend the legal authority of loan and trust corporations to operate in Ontario.

Under the current act, no corporation may carry on the business of a loan or trust corporation in Ontario after July 1, 1999. This amendment would change the date to July 1, 2001. If legislation to extend the date is not enacted before July 1, 1999, loan and trust corporations would be unable to legally carry on business in Ontario after that date.

This straightforward amendment before us needs to be addressed in a timely manner. To help ensure quick passage, the bill deals only with amending the date.

This amendment would affect nearly 50 loan and trust companies, with assets of about \$100 billion, and estate and trust money under administration of more than \$900 billion. These companies have been a vital part of the financial services sector for years and have served the needs of Ontarians by performing important financial services in our communities. They have traditionally been providers of mortgage financing for families buying a home. Trust companies are a source of capital for small business. They are an important source of competition and innovation in the financial services industry.

Our government's goal is to ensure that consumers continue to be protected, that small businesses have greater access to capital, and that companies can compete and respond to the changing needs of individual and business customers. All of this leads to a strong economy, a strong economy that is critical to everything that people want in life for themselves, a strong economy that ensures that every possible dollar goes towards a strong health care system—

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): On a point of order, Madam Speaker: I don't believe there's a quorum here.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Clerk, could you check and see if there's a quorum, please.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): A quorum is not present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker ordered the bells rung.

Clerk at the Table: A quorum is now present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Halton Centre.

Mr Young: All of this leads to a strong economy, a strong economy that is critical to everything that people want in life for themselves, a strong economy that ensures that every possible dollar goes towards a strong health care system, maintains a strong education and training system, for better jobs for our young in their early years.

For too long this government has heard that there was too much duplication and waste in the way things were done. We've worked hard and will continue working to reduce overlap and duplication in the regulation of the loan and trust industry. During the past two years we have taken some important steps.

We eliminated an extra layer of regulation, known as the equals approach, on companies already regulated by the federal government. This had imposed outdated provincial rules on all loan and trust companies operating in the province, even when those rules conflicted with modern federal legislation. We modernized and harmonized investment and lending rules with the federal rules. We gave Ontario incorporated companies the power to apply for federal charters. We signed an information-sharing agreement with the federal Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions to help Ontario meet its examination requirements of federal companies registered in the province and to help Ontario companies apply for federal charters. We streamlined regulatory resources to reflect Ontario's changing regulatory role.

We've consulted extensively regarding Ontario's future role in the regulation of this industry.

Over the last 10 years, the trust and loan industry in Ontario has changed dramatically. It is now dominated by companies owned or controlled by federally regulated institutions like the chartered banks and insurance companies. Only a handful of small Ontario incorporated trust and loan companies remain. They account for about 1% of the industry's assets.

The federal government has implemented major legislative changes and has taken an increasingly larger role in setting standards for the industry. At the same time, several other provinces have recently taken steps to limit their regulatory involvement.

The recent federal Task Force on the Future of Financial Institutions recommended streamlining the regulatory process and reducing or eliminating inter-governmental overlap.

1550

We recognize the importance of a strong, competitive financial service sector. It is clear that regulatory duplication creates additional costs to industry, consumers, and

most of all, taxpayers. These costs are not justified in Ontario today.

As the Lieutenant Governor said in the throne speech last Thursday: "The economy is strong. But today's successes are merely a prologue to tomorrow's challenges." As well, the Lieutenant Governor indicated, "In a competitive global environment, the eyes of the international community are upon us."

We continue to work to make Ontario more competitive and to maintain and build our reputation worldwide as an attractive place to invest, do business and create jobs. The deficit has been reduced; the budget is on track to be balanced by fiscal year 2000-01; the private sector has created 540,000 new jobs in less than four years; taxes have been cut 69 times. Ontario leads the nation in economic growth.

We are committed to keeping Ontario's loan and trust industry strong and maintaining its important role in Ontario's positive business climate. This amendment is a step towards that goal.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to continue the debate on the bill to amend the Loan and Trust Corporations Act. It is, as we all understand it, a comparatively straightforward bill in that essentially it allows the loan industry to continue beyond July 1 of this year, because currently, unless we pass this bill, our loan and trust organizations would cease to exist, I think as of July 1. Clearly we will be supporting the bill. I would urge a future government to deal with this perhaps on a more long-term basis than extending the life of the loan and trust industry by a year, although this does it for two years.

I want to comment on some of the same issues the previous speaker commented on, and that is the impact this bill will have on our financial institutions and the lessons we can learn from some of our financial institutions.

I asked the legislative research people if they could review for me the history province of how we manage our finances in the province. I asked them to look back over the budgets of the province and I said, "When did we have balanced budgets and when did we run deficits?" I was quite, I guess "surprised" is the word, to find that the last time a Conservative government balanced the budget, according to the legislative library, was the 1969-70 budget. It was this budget here. The Honourable Charles MacNaughton was the Treasurer. Ever since then the Conservatives have never balanced a budget.

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): And the Liberals?

Mr Phillips: The member for Peterborough says, "And the Liberals?" Here's what the researcher said: "You inquired about the date of the last balanced budget in Ontario. In fiscal 1988-89, the province of Ontario recorded a surplus of \$90 million. The Liberal Party was in power at that time. Previous to that the budget was balanced during fiscal 1969-70 when the Conservatives were in power."

The reason I raise that is because none of my business friends believe me when I say that. I say: "Bill Davis never balanced a budget. Mike Harris has added" — as a matter of fact, I was out knocking on doors the other day and this fellow said to me, "You know, I think it's important to get our fiscal house in order." I said: "I agree with you. Do you realize Mike Harris has added over 25% to the debt of the province of Ontario? He's added \$23 billion to the debt of the province since he came in." They can't believe it. This person said, "Send me that, because I want to show my friends at work." That's \$23 billion, 25%, added to the debt of the province of Ontario. Anybody who is watching this who may be interested can phone our office and we'd be happy to send it to them.

It's in the budget. You simply look in the budget book. There will be a new one coming out on Tuesday. But as you can see here, when Mike Harris took over as Premier, the debt was \$88 billion. It's now \$110 billion — as I say, up 25%. Nobody believes that, but there it is.

The last Conservative government that balanced a budget was in 1969. I went to the library and got it out. I thought it was quite interesting. Mike Harris won't balance the budget in his term in office. As a matter of fact, he's saying that on Tuesday he won't balance the budget. It's going to be March 31, 2001.

I was interested to see, as I'm sure most members were, that Quebec has a balanced budget now, March 31, 1999, completely balanced. Newfoundland has a balanced budget, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, PEI, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia. But Mike hasn't even come close to a balanced budget. Not only that, but he's saying: "I won't balance the budget next Tuesday. You're going to have to wait until the next millennium, well after the next election." As I say, none of my business friends can believe that.

Then I say to them, "You know, I remember when Mike Harris was sitting here and Bob Rae was sitting there and the credit rating in the province of Ontario was downgraded. Mike Harris accused Bob Rae of almost everything.

Mr Marchese: I remember.

Mr Phillips: Mr Marchese remembers. I can remember Mike saying — going that way then — "You're ruining the province. We can't get by with a credit rating downgrade." Ontario had three credit rating downgrades during the NDP. For those who follow it, Ontario used to have a AAA credit rating and it went to AA+, AA, AA-, and Mike Harris couldn't believe it.

Now where are we? We're four years into the Harris government regime. There are four major credit rating agencies; none of them has upgraded Ontario's credit rating. Mike Harris has exactly the same credit rating after four years as Bob Rae had, and he hasn't made a dent in the credit rating.

Interjection.

Mr Phillips: What's the point? The point is, the people who are the objective evaluators of how Mike Harris manages the finances of the province say you are

as creditworthy now as Bob Rae was. That's the point of it all. The point of it all is that Mike Harris has the same credit rating as Bob Rae, not a change in it.

Mr Young: On a point of order, Speaker: We're debating Bill 3.

The Acting Speaker: I listened closely to your speech as well, and I've allowed some leniency in your speech as well as in this one.

1600

Mr Phillips: Thank you, Speaker. I listened carefully too. The member talked about exports, jobs, finances, all of those things. I'm essentially responding to the parliamentary assistant who introduced this.

I wanted to respond by saying these things: First, the last balanced budget by a Conservative government was in 1969. A lot of people can't believe it when you tell them that. I say, "Listen, they've added 25% to the debt of the province. The tax cut that Mike says everybody benefits from, we had to go out and borrow all that money. We borrowed the money to give ourselves a tax cut. About \$10 billion of that \$23 billion was as a result of having to borrow money for the tax cut.

As part of the finances that the parliamentary assistant talked about, I want to talk a little bit about the 407 deal. The reason I raise that is because loan and trust organizations were involved in those proposals. Here's what happened on the 407. I talk to my 905 friends and I say: "You know what happened on 407? The 407 cost about \$1.5 billion to build, and Harris sold it for \$3.1 billion."

How could he do that? How could you pay \$1.5 billion and sell it for \$3.1 billion? Here's how he did it: He promised whoever bought it that they would own it for 99 years. Other projects like this around the world have a much more limited time, but Mike said, "No, no, you can buy it for 99 years," and believe me, 407 will be jam-packed. All of my 905 friends realize now that they have essentially given Mike his reelection fund, because they sold it for 99 years and then they also said: "Whoever buys this can increase the tolls every year by 2% above inflation. You take inflation and we'll let you go 2% above that." It is a licence to print money, and so there was a bidding war to see who could buy this. But you know who's going to pay for it? The 905 toll payers. They are now beginning to realize that Mike doubled the price on them, sold it out, and guaranteed that whoever buys it could take the tolls up 2% a year over inflation.

By the way, you don't get your licence renewed if you go to get your licence renewed and you haven't paid your tolls. This is a wonderful deal for the organization that bought it. It is a one-time infusion of a bundle of money. I'll tell you when the deal closes: May 5.

Mr Marchese: What a coincidence.

Mr Phillips: What a coincidence. If you look at the deal, on May 5 you've got to deliver the money. Well, of course, that's probably the day the election will be called. Mike Harris must thank all those 905 people. He must get down on his knees and say, "Thank you for giving me this re-election fund."

It is going to give these private sector arrangements a bad name, because rather than saying, "Who can build a road the most efficiently and charge the users of that road the most efficient tolls and still make it a reasonable business deal?" those weren't the criteria. It was, "Who will give us the most one-time money?" So there were four companies in a bidding war. They had a choice: 99 years or 199 years. They took 99 years, but believe me, down the road when the 905 people who are going to pay this realize that they paid \$1.6 billion above the cost to build it — what does \$1.6 billion mean? Most organizations want about an 8% return on investment, so the tolls have to be almost \$130 million a year higher than they would have been if we had simply said, "You users pay for the cost of the road." No, no. Mike wanted that big profit, and the difference between the cost of the road and the profit is going to cost the users about \$128 million a year.

The reason I raise that is because we are dealing with the financial institutions. Most of the financial institutions in Ontario were involved in the bidding on the 407. This was one of the huge deals, and I know that Mike is very proud of this. "We sold this road for \$3.1 billion and we only invested \$1.5 billion. We doubled our money." Well, who paid for that? Nobody but the users of that road. What Mike Harris did is he sold those toll road users to the company. He said, "I'll guarantee you for 99 years both a huge number of customers, and I'll guarantee that over the next 15 years, every single year, you can increase the toll by 2% plus inflation, and I'll guarantee that I won't let anybody who doesn't pay the tolls renew their licence, so you're going to get all your money."

I remember the day it was announced. It was trumpeted as one of these great private sector deals. There's one person who was forgotten in this and that's the taxpayer, that's the users, that's the 905 people who have to use this road. So it's going to be interesting.

I want to be very clear. I'm for building the 407. I'm for the private sector involvement in it. I dare say it should be expanded well beyond the Brock Road, but the criteria used — which is to say, "How do we get this built for the best deal for the users?" It wasn't that at all. "How do we get the highest possible price paid on May 5?" That was the criteria. Probably the day the election is called that money flows in from the company that bought it. As I say, the 905ers will give a huge re-election fund for Mike. I'm not sure they'll get much thanks for it.

I'm pleased to discuss this bill to say that we're supportive of it, obviously. If we don't pass it, the loan and trust organizations are out of business. But I want to get on the record, because the parliamentary assistant raised these issues — and people can get this information on their own. As I say, the last balanced budget from the Conservative government was in 1969, the debt adding already roughly \$23 billion, and I gather on Tuesday they're going to add some more debt to the province. The credit rating of the province after four years: The professional organizations whose job it is to rate the

credit worthiness of companies and governments say, "No, I'm not going to give Mike Harris a better rating than I gave Bob Rae."

On the 407, as we peel back the deal, we find that there was one huge loser in this and that's the users of the toll roads who've now got to pay probably close to \$128 million a year extra in tolls to carry the \$1.6 billion that they paid over the cost of the road.

Finally, I'd say that in terms of management of things, I find it really odd that this is the second bill like this we've had to pass extending the life of a major organization in the province of Ontario. As I say, I would hope that future governments deal on a more long-term basis with important organizations like this.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): I just want to say from the outset that I will be sharing my time with the member for Fort York, who I expected was going to be here momentarily to engage in this debate of such important significance.

Mr Marchese: Of course he's here.

Mr Lessard: We have a piece of legislation that I know is of exceptional importance to this government, that we have to be here on a Thursday afternoon when I know that all of the members of the Tory caucus are anxiously awaiting the opportunity to adjourn so that they can go down to their gigantic political fundraising event this evening, an event where they expect they're going to raise \$3 million to fund their election campaign, I might say.

I look to my friend the member for Fort York and ask him, "How is it that members of the NDP are going to be able to compete in this coming election, with resources like that to buy all those expensive television ads that we expect the \$3 million is going to go towards? I know that one of the ways we're going to do that is that it's going to be a platform that is a clear alternative to the blue book, I guess is what has been released today, of the Progressive Conservative government.

1610

This legislation, Bill 3, An Act to amend the Loan and Trust Corporations Act, that this government seems to think is so significant that they have to call it on the eve of an election, the dying days of this government, makes me wonder, what about all the other important legislation that the government had on its agenda just before Christmas? What about some of the other things that we should have been debating during that long break between December 17, 1998, and the beginning of the Legislature just a couple of weeks ago? Months and months went by where this Legislature wasn't doing any work whatsoever while there were important issues that we should have been debating but weren't.

In my own riding, we were experiencing long waits for emergency service, people who were being discharged from the hospitals too early, if they were able to get emergency surgery, or being discharged from hospitals too soon. I sent a letter to the Premier asking

him to recall the Legislature, but I never got any response to that — no surprise.

We're debating this bill to amend the Loan and Trust Corporations Act. I think of other legislation that was on the order paper that we should have been debating during that time, that should have been reintroduced by now and that we should be able to pass quite expeditiously. I'm thinking of the adoption disclosure legislation, for one good example, a bill that had the support of almost all the members in this Legislature, at least a strong majority of support, prior to the break at Christmas but just never got passed. There are many in our communities hoping that legislation is going to be passed, but I'm afraid it's not going to make it because we're on the eve of an election and we're debating legislation like An Act to amend the Loan and Trust Corporations Act instead of an important piece of legislation such as that.

I would have thought we may have had an opportunity to discuss some of the findings of the Environmental Commissioner's report, another scathing attack on this government's environmental record, the fourth or fifth year in a row, I think, that the Environmental Commissioner has been exceptionally critical of this government's environmental record. In fact, the bottom line of her report is that the Mike Harris government is bad for your health. Even that doesn't seem to get the attention of this government to take action with respect to trying to improve the environment. But no, we're not dealing with any actions to try and improve the environment and to improve the quality of health of people in our communities.

Mr Marchese: It's bad news. That's why they don't want to talk about it.

Mr Lessard: That's right. It is bad news. It's bad news for this government. That's why they don't want to engage in a debate about it. They don't want to introduce any new ideas or legislation to deal with the problems in the environment and the impact that's having on our health because they know it might cost a few bucks too, and we know where those bucks are going these days. Those bucks are going to the top 6% of the population in Ontario, the wealthiest few in Ontario who are going to benefit from the fact that there have been substantial cuts from the budget of the environment ministry in the province of Ontario. In fact, the other night the member for Northumberland used the fact that there had been so many cuts in staff in the Ministry of the Environment as a sign of success, that so many people had been cut from the ministry and that they were still able to operate with so few staff. But we know they're not able to enforce the law, they're not able to prosecute the law and they're not able to collect fines when people are convicted, the few people who are convicted, of contravening the environmental legislation.

Those are just a few of the pieces of legislation that I think we should be debating instead of Bill 3, An Act to amend the Loan and Trust Corporations Act, a bill that is probably more substantive than the paper it's printed on, I would think — one piece of paper on each side; that's

the extent of this legislation. It really is one section to permit the business of a loan corporation or a trust corporation to continue after July 1, 2001. Really, all that does is extend the ability of loan and trust corporations for two more years. It sounds like it's not a bad idea, but I'm looking forward to my friend the member for Fort York to enlighten me further about the importance of extending this time period for another two years.

Maybe after we're finished debating this legislation we can deal with those important issues of the lack of action on air quality in Ontario, how Bill 35, the energy act, is going to encourage dirty, coal-fired electricity from the United States to be sent to Ontario and how we in the southwestern part of Ontario are just going to end up with increased air pollution as a result. There's a possibility that there may be cheaper electricity, but the cost to the environment and the cost to our health is going to be enormous. I, for one, and I believe the people I represent, don't want to pay that cost. They want clean air, they want clean water, they want clean land as well. That will be an issue on the agenda during the coming election which I am looking forward to in the next couple of weeks.

At this point I'd like to turn it over to the member for Fort York.

Mr Marchese: I congratulate my colleague from Windsor-Riverside for the comments he has made and would add a few more for the benefit of the few Tory members who are still here, those who are waiting to get to the fund-raising event. This is my first opportunity since we have come back to make some points. We're on live.

Applause.

Mr Marchese: I thank the Tory members for the applause. I've got to tell you, I'm happy to be back; I've missed this place. It has been a long, long time since we have been here. I have missed the opportunity to speak with the Tory members opposite and welcome it as always, happy to speak to this particular bill, which we support, by the way. I would add a few comments because the member for Halton Centre talked about how this sector is so key to the economy and an important component of the generator of wealth in this country.

It is all in keeping with the ethos of this government when they talk about wealth and when they talk about the economy, because tonight these Tories are going to a fund-raising event, and this event costs \$500 a pop. The members opposite, with consternation, say "wow," as if it's not a big deal, I imagine. But there are a lot of homo sapiens out there, ordinary people, who don't make that kind of money to come to your event; \$500 is a whole heap of money. I've got to tell you, I make a good salary and I can't afford to go. Even if I were invited, I couldn't afford to go. Who goes to these events, talking about the great economy and wealth and the generators of wealth? Who do you think goes?

1620

Mr Young: Who donates to your campaign?

Mr Marchese: I'll be quite frank with you. The member for Halton Centre says, "Who donates to your

campaign?" The people who donate to my campaign are individuals who live in my riding — ordinary people. I don't have bank managers or bank presidents giving me a few bucks. I don't have the loan and trust companies coming to me, "Marchese, here are a couple of bucks for your campaign." No siree — ordinary people.

Mr Young: Bob White. Buzz Hargrove.

Mr Marchese: The member for Halton Centre says, "Who else funds your campaign?" He says Buzz Hargrove. He's not a friend of mine. I've got to tell you that. He's not a friend of mine. Maybe he is for many others, but I'm not sure whether he's a friend of mine or not.

The unions support this party in small measure: 15% of our funding comes from unions. The rest comes from people who believe in what we stand for, unlike you fine Tories. The loan and trust company people who are coming to your event tonight to thank you for this are the people who are coming to dish our 500 bucks — 500 bills. It's a lot of money.

The people who earn less than \$20,000 won't be able to come to your event, and they send their regrets. The people who earn \$30,000 will not be able to come; they send their regrets. I suspect the people who earn less than \$60,000 are unable to come; they send their regrets. I suspect the people who make less than \$80,000, non-taxable yet, are sending their regrets too. You know who's coming to your event? Largely the people who earn over \$80,000 taxable income, the very people your income tax cut benefits. These are the people whose wheels you are helping to grease, who are coming to give you their thanks for helping them out so that they can do well in this economy.

We have such tremendous wealth in this country and in this province. Did you know, my friend from Windsor-Riverside, that the gap between the rich and the poor is so vast that the top few percent make 315% more than the little guy at the bottom? We're not talking about a percentage difference between these people here and these people here; we're talking about 315%. We're talking about their buddies, the ones who make over \$80,000 taxable income.

The banker who makes \$1.5 million gets \$120,000 back because Mike Harris, the Premier, believes they deserve it. And don't worry if they reinvest that money in their own stocks and bonds because that's money well invested. It will go in their own accounts for sure. It might go to foreign investments, but Mike Harris says: "That's OK. If the big guys get \$120,000, that helps the economy." But you ordinary people watching this program, do you believe the bankers need \$120,000 a year in an income tax cut? I ask you, loan and trust corporation managers, do you believe you need this income tax cut? I don't think you do. I don't think you need it. We're going to take that money back.

It is all fine for the Tories to say that's a tax increase, and you've got a lot of help. You've got the Toronto Sun, God bless them. You've got the Globe, God bless them too. You've got the National Post. How many papers do

you need on your side to send the message? Are there any more papers out there that — you need more newspapers to send the message? Three is not enough?

Why, even the Toronto Star is helping you guys out because they say the message of the NDP is that that's a tax increase. We're taking the money that Harris has given the top 6%, \$1.5 billion, representing 25% of the income tax cut — a few people taking a big chunk of money. We're saying we're taking it back because you don't need it. Even the Star says that's a tax increase. I don't understand it. I understand it from the Toronto Sun and the National Post. God bless Conrad Black; he earns a pretty good buck. He's getting more money from you. The income tax cut will be good for him because he'll reinvest that money back into buying more newspapers across the country.

You see, Conrad Black doesn't own enough. Like owning 60% of all the newspapers in this country is not enough. He needs money from this government, right? Because he earns — I don't know. He must earn a lot of millions. Stronach earns \$25 million a year. He's going to get a pretty dollar back. He earns \$25 million as his salary, right? How much are you boys giving him back at the end of the — come on, Norm, you know. Come on, don't give me that. You know how much money he gets back, because you know what he earns, right? Come on, you know.

I'm going to finish very shortly. I just wanted to make a few points.

By the way, this income tax cut is adding \$1.2 billion —

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: Please, this is an important point. This income tax cut of yours adds \$1.2 billion to the deficit. It adds to the deficit. These fine Tories say: "Oh, the economy is thriving. Why? Because of the income tax cut." It's boosting the deficit up — no doubt about that — \$1.2 billion.

Mr Douglas B. Ford (Etobicoke-Humber): Listen who's talking about deficits. You're a joke.

Mr Marchese: The member for Etobicoke-Humber laughs with his usual friendly smile. I've got to tell you, I love it. He says, "Look who's talking." The NDP isn't saying, "Increase the deficit," but you boys who take credit for bringing it down are simultaneously —

Interjection.

Mr Marchese: No, no, listen to the answer, please. I know, he's a friendly man and he's here to have a good time, and I'm glad he's here, but I'm telling him and the others that he's increasing the deficit. He and the others, they're part of the same government, the same gang who are here making these decisions and adding to the deficit.

Mr Ford: If you want to know what deficit is all about, the federal government is \$600 billion in debt. That's why we have to pay more taxes.

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Member for Fort York, speak to the Chair, please.

Mr Marchese: I want to congratulate and thank him for the contribution. They've added \$1.2 billion to the deficit because of the income tax cut.

Mr Ford: I'm going to go.

Mr Marchese: Finally, he's leaving. It's about time. Member from Humber, we'll talk to you later. It was nice to see you here.

Highway 407, what a gravy train that is. What a sweetheart deal. By the way, are they coming to the fundraising event?

Mr Lessard: I wonder how many tables they bought?

Mr Marchese: Tables, please, they probably bought the convention centre with that kind of money.

We're talking about three billion bucks and you guys have given them a lease for 99 years. You see how long that gravy train is? Like it goes on and on. It's beyond my lifetime, unless they come up with some genetic invention that will allow me to see the end of that deal, and I don't think so.

Giving these corporate friends of yours the ability, the freedom, unhindered by any government, to do what they want for 99 years, to raise the tolls perpetually, all to do us a favour, all to help this government out because the government says: "Oh, we made \$1.6 billion out of this deal. Aren't we good?"

It's hard to really fathom the intelligence of this government, quite frankly, but some people buy into it. The fact that they have sold a public traffic system that should belong to us, that should be public — these guys have given the corporate sector for 99 years a gravy train that will go on and on and they're happy that the government has made 1.6 billion bucks.

I don't know. I'd be happy to come to your fundraising event for \$500 a pop. These are your friends. I'm describing the types of people this government relates to, connects to, is in sync with. These are the people who share the wealth with these members of this Legislature. These are the people for whom we are doing a lot of good. These are the people for whom this economy has done well. They're the ones who are doing well in this economy while the rest of us, ordinary people watching this program, are working longer, harder, for less money, with more stress than we have ever witnessed before. In fact, the civil servants who are advising us tonight, who are behind the benches of the Speaker, the ones smiling behind there, your staff and other ministry staff, these people are putting in longer hours, working harder, longer, for less, with more stress than they have ever seen before, including the clerks, I would think.

1630

Mr Young: Are you talking about the social contract?

Mr Marchese: No, I'm talking about the fact that you fine people have laid off 14,000 to 20,000 civil servants —

Interjection: And they say it's not enough.

Mr Marchese: — and they say they want to fire 14,000 more in order to allow those people behind the bench there to work longer, harder, for less money, with more stress, and if they don't like it, there are 14,000 other people you fired who would come back and do the job.

This economy has done well for a whole lot of people, but at the bottom levels it's not happy times. They are working double time under stressful conditions. Wages have been frozen for nine years for most of these people, whereas the corporate profits have double or tripled for many, whereas corporate profits for managers have doubled or tripled because they take pleasure in firing people so their profits can triple, which they call "effective management," "greater accountability to the profit holders," and so on and so forth. The poor schlep out there working for a couple of dollars has to work longer, harder, for less, and it's not getting any better.

Young people are working longer, harder, for less. The kinds of comforts we had in our great economy — it's not getting any better. They won't be able to afford the houses that we could afford a while ago because they are not making the money that we did at one point. But your corporate friends who are buying the 407, they're doing OK. The loan and trust companies are doing OK, and the banks are doing OK. God bless the Tories, and to a great extent the Liberal Party helping out, because they sure could use the help.

We obviously support this bill. It's important to pass it. But I just wanted to remind the public that I won't be able to make the Tory dinner for \$500. I apologize and regret it, because if I had a couple of hundred thousand, I might have been able to go and listen to Mike and see what he has to say tonight.

Tonight he's going to unveil this great blue book. Tonight he may or may not announce that we're going to have an election. I suspect this is what Mike is going to do, Speaker, if you will allow me just a few more seconds to say that Mike Harris is worried that his popularity is dipping, and it is. He was going to wait for another week and a half to call the election. I predicted May 12 for June 10. I predicted he was going to announce his budget next week, allow that to simmer, allow the magic of the budget to filter very nicely into our psyche, and then have the election, but he can't afford that.

So what is he going to do? He's going to announce the budget next week. He's going to announce all those great tax cuts again. The bankers are going to be happy with more cuts because they don't have enough; they've been starving for years. Their profits haven't been high enough. So Mike says, "I'm going to announce a few more cuts. People are going to feel great"; it's a sugar pill. Immediately, poof, the election gets called. That's what Premier Mike Harris is going to do.

I predict it may not be May 12 any longer; it may be right after the budget. So I thought I would stand to speak on this important issue before Mike Harris calls the election, because we may not have another opportunity.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Young has moved second reading of Bill 3. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I

believe we have unanimous consent to complete third reading of Bill 3 this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker: Is it agreed? Agreed.

LOAN AND TRUST CORPORATIONS AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SOCIÉTÉS DE PRÊT ET DE FIDUCIE

Mr Sterling, on behalf of Mr Eves, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 3, An Act to amend the Loan and Trust Corporations Act / Projet de loi 3, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sociétés de prêt et de fiducie.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

VINTNERS QUALITY ALLIANCE ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ APPELÉE VINTNERS QUALITY ALLIANCE

Mrs Ross, on behalf of Mr Tsubouchi, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to provide for the designation of a wine authority to establish an appellation of origin system for Vintners Quality Alliance wine and to administer that system / Projet de loi 8, Loi prévoyant la désignation d'un office des vins afin d'établir et d'administrer un système d'appellations d'origine pour les vins de la société appelée Vintners Quality Alliance.

Mrs Lillian Ross (Hamilton West): In Ontario we have a determined and committed industry of grape growers and winemakers who have established our reputation for fine wines both nationally and internationally. In speaking to this bill, I would like to take a moment to pay tribute to some of those individuals who've worked so hard.

From the VQA, I'd like to thank Len Pennachetti, the current chairman, and Don Ziraldo, who was the driving force behind the VQA; the Wine Council of Ontario, under the chairmanship of Bruce Walker; and the grape growers, under John Neufeld. As well, I'd like to thank the wine caucus of the government: members Tim Hudak, Tom Froese, Frank Sheehan, Bart Maves and Jack Carroll.

Adopting the VQA Act, 1999, is an important step in the continuing development of Ontario's fine wines. This act will promote opportunities to export Ontario wines and enhance our standards of excellence in winemaking. This development will help our industry grow and prosper and further strengthen its reputation for producing world-class wine products.

The act provides for government-sanctioned standards for those who wish to produce VQA wine in Ontario. For example, it will establish a system to control appellation of origin and it permits the Lieutenant Governor in Council to designate a not-for-profit corporation — a wine authority — that will administer the act and its regulations.

As I suggested earlier, this legislation is the product of close cooperation between the Ministry of Consumer and Commercial Relations and the wine and grape-growing industries in Ontario. We keep in close contact with these organizations involved in grape production and winemaking. We understand the challenges facing the industry. We have listened carefully during our discussions and we have responded to their concerns.

We know, for example, that the request for legislated standards is far more than just a marketing strategy. It is an essential move to ensure our wineries are world players. In describing the importance of mandatory standards, the Wine Council of Ontario says that legislation is an historic rite of passage for the Ontario wine industry, allowing it to take its place among other serious wine-producing regions in the world.

Such legislation is an important prerequisite in gaining access to world markets and making VQA as recognizable to consumers as appellation quality rules and controls are for wines from France, Italy, Germany and other countries. The absence of government-sanctioned standards makes it difficult for our wines to be accepted in Europe, with its well-established appellation systems. For example, Ontario makes some of the finest dessert wines in the world. Our icewines regularly win gold medals at international competitions, but they are not for sale in Europe because European Union standards do not recognize Ontario icewine as a wine product. Sanctioning VQA rules through legislation puts us in a position where we can argue that our icewine and other VQA wines have quality standards that are equivalent to the world's best.

Therefore, this legislation will help the federal government in its discussions with European officials on wine access and open the door for us to obtain mutual recognition with that market.

We are pleased to be helping our wine industry overcome international barriers and introduce VQA to other nations. Wine consumers around the world are ready for a taste of Ontario. By passing this act, all of us in this Legislature can say we helped to make it happen.

1640

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Questions and comments? Further debate.

Mr Alvin Curling (Scarborough North): The opportunity I have today is to speak on this bill that we were so long awaiting. As you know, no grapes are grown in Scarborough North, but I can tell you that in Scarborough North we drink the finest of wine. The finest of wine really is from Ontario. Sometimes in a competitive way we want to make sure we're drinking

the right stuff. We really welcome this act, the Vintners Quality Alliance Act.

We know that Ontario is competing in the world and winning awards all over. As a matter of fact my colleague Jim Bradley, who is from the area of St Catharines, which as you know grows some the finest wines, is just ecstatic about this, that it's about time we had some quality and some sort of regulation and legislation to govern this, so we can make sure the wine we are drinking is labelled, and within any competition, regardless of what part of the world we're in, we know what kind of wine we're drinking.

The member has said to me that he wants to applaud this government. He has said basically he's very nervous about applauding the government, because there aren't many times he can do that. For years he has been asking for this to come forward, and now that it has come forward he said to me, "You tell them how happy I am about this," although he's not here to endorse that and give the word about this wonderful wine.

Let me tell you my experience with wine, because it's important. I was introduced to wine inside this Legislature, when they had the wine-tasting competitions. I was not a person who really enjoyed wine in any form. But having gone around and tasted some of the wines downstairs, in the members' lounge, and seen the people and the dedication of those people — the farmers, the growers of grapes — and the knowledge they had, I was extremely impressed. Surprisingly enough, having been able to understand what to look for in a wine, I said to myself, "It seems to me that Ontario is on the map, competing around the world, with wine." Later on I tried other wines. I've had other wines from Germany, France and even Italian wines. Let me tell you, the Ontario wines matched right up with any of those wines. I have to admire the fact that we do produce the best. But how could we know? We had no legislation.

I understand too that this legislation, this act, will make sure that when we are out in the market competing, it can be read very much that we are competing and we are one of the best in the world in that respect. I stand to endorse that.

I won't be speaking for long at all on this, but just want to say that the Liberal Party welcomes the fact that this act is in place. I want to commend those who have put it forward, and I want to commend the farmers and congratulate the growers in St Catharines. They have done a tremendous job to make us really proud of the fact that when we lift a glass and drink the wine of Ontario, we know we have one of the best wines in the world.

Those are just a few comments, although sometimes I'm tempted to speak on many other issues that I disagree with under this government. But I know it is not the opportune time now, because there are some anxious members who are going to their fundraiser right now, the big \$500 fundraiser I heard about. What does this have to do with wine? Let me tell you. I hope that when you get there you will demand that you drink Ontario wines. It will be very upsetting to many of the growers in St

Catharines and Niagara-on-the-Lake if you have ordered any foreign wines there, because we have the best. I'd like it if they could report to us on Monday what type of wine they had there. I know about the \$500-a-plate fundraiser they're having and the tremendous amount of money they have. I hope they will order and serve the best wine, which is Ontario wine. But again, many of those who are contributing to this big fundraiser tonight have more money than they can even manage, and they may not be serving Ontario wine. It would be a sad situation to know that today, on the same day we are passing this act, to which we will give second and third reading, as I understand, we will not have Ontario wine, because we'll protect that in this legislation.

I just want to congratulate those who have brought this forward and also those grape growers in Niagara, St Catharines and all of Ontario.

I'll be sharing my time, I understand, with my colleague.

Mr Mario Sergio (Yorkview): I am delighted to say a few words on this particular topic. It is not a topic in which I have a lot of experience, but I have some limited knowledge when it comes to wine, wine making, wine tasting, whatever. My comments will be strictly related to the bill that has been presented to the House, speaking in support of the bill.

I think this is high time. This is one good move that should be supported by every member of the House, for a number of reasons. Not only has our own Canadian wine established itself throughout the world, but it has become an excellent competitor among the best wines of the world. This is a testament to the fact that a number of Canadian, or I should say Ontario, wineries have acquired world-renowned qualities; they have won many, many awards.

I have to put in a plug — and I don't mind; I'll do it with great pleasure — for one very old, established winery in my riding. It is known, or was known originally, as Vin Bon, which translates into "good wine." It has been in operation for a great number of years. Recently they have grown to the proportion that now they have not only the one; they have expanded north of my own riding into my colleague Mr Palladini's area. They have a wonderful shop with a variety of their excellent wines, including perhaps the best ice wine. The wine is called Cilento Wines. I have to put that in because they have been wonderful business people in the community and they produce an excellent wine.

To the members of the House, why should we support the appellation of the VQA, standing for the Vintners Quality Alliance? I think our government should be doing everything possible to support this wonderful industry, the wineries. Niagara, St Catharines and other areas need that support, any support we can give.

This is a multi-million dollar industry, not only because of the quality of the various good wines we produce and not only because of the number of people they employ, but also because it produces a large income

for the provincial coffers and it supports a lot of local industries as well.

I support the various wineries, the producers, in the general Niagara area. They are doing an excellent job in promoting themselves and what they have to offer the residents of Ontario, the rest of Canada and tourists as well.

Last year — and I love travelling in the area, driving in that beautiful part of our province — you could have seen a number of foreigners visiting those wineries; I enjoyed doing so myself. Indeed, they offer our consumers and our province another aspect of the variety of industries we have here in Ontario and in Canada.

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Tourism is big with respect to wine, wine-making, wineries, the region itself. I'm sure the local members of the area know that full well. The tourist industry is booming in that particular region, not only for the attraction of Niagara itself but the region as a whole.

I had an opportunity to visit a number of inns in the area, and I'll tell you they are wonderful places. That is one area that should be explored more by ourselves, by our own Ontario people. Our own government should be supportive and do more.

The inns, part of the tourist attractions we offer, offer some assistance to the wineries as well. They compliment each other; they support each other. Especially during the summer months they attract a tremendously large number of tourists, and of course that spells employment and that spells more money for the other industries in the region, other businesses, and also more money for our own government here, let alone the exporting. There are so many avenues to the nature of our business here.

I think it's recognition of the amount of work the people who are applying themselves to those industries have done. I think we have to recognize that as well; we owe it to those industrious people. They have come a long way. Indeed, if you look back 10 or 15 years, we have to say that in those last 10, 15, maybe 20 years or so, they have come a tremendously long way, and we have to applaud. We have to applaud those who managed to plod through the bad times, partly because of the quality of grapes and partly because of our own environment. They've been suffering, but I think now they have come a long way.

The quality of vines and the quality of wine that comes from them, I think we have a most wonderful variety, which rivals any other European — Italian, French and so forth. Let me tell you that our wine industry can be proud to call itself part of the world class of wine and wineries.

What else can I say? It's something we fully support, and I would exhort the government to do whatever it can to support this particular industry and even to support it from the tourist point of view.

To the people in my own community — they employ a lot of people in this particular industry — I say it is good to have you there. To the people in the Niagara region, all those people who have gone through bad times and

good times, I say good for you for sticking it out and compliments for doing an excellent job on behalf of the Ontario people and putting us on the world map with respect to vines and wines. I would say we should be helping you all the way and help you promote and help our people in Ontario as well.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, for having the opportunity to speak on behalf of the wine industry.

The Speaker: Questions and comments? Further debate?

Mr Wayne Lessard (Windsor-Riverside): I just wanted to point out at the outset I'll be splitting my time with the member for Fort York, who tells me that he has got a great deal of expertise when it comes to speaking of the issues of wine and the Vintners Quality Alliance Act.

Oftentimes, as members here we're expected to speak on issues that sometimes we're not experts on, sometimes we need to do a little bit of research on. Sometimes they might be issues that we might not even be prepared to speak about, but this is one that I actually enjoy having an opportunity to make a few remarks about, because there aren't grape growers to any large extent in my own riding but there certainly is a very vibrant wine industry in the Essex county area, and I know this industry is looking forward to this legislation.

Once again, we're here about six months after this bill was originally introduced. This is another one of those bills that died on the order paper way back in December and now, finally, the government is getting around to passing this legislation in the dying days of this government. This is something we could have done a long time ago, but finally we are getting around to it and that is a great thing, because it is going to benefit wineries in the Essex county area.

I am thinking specifically of Colio wines, located in Harrow, in the southern part of Essex county, that either last year or quite recently was the winery that had the legislative white wine in the dining room here in Queen's Park. That just gives you some idea of the quality of wine that comes from the Essex county area.

Another winery is Pelee Island Winery, located in Kingsville, once again in the southern part of Essex county; they also have vines located on Pelee Island. They have a visitors' centre on Pelee Island and they attract a large number of tourists to the island as a result of that industry, a growing industry on that island as well. That has attracted a number of other businesses to come to the island and to invest as well. Tourism is going to be big business on Pelee Island this year, as a result of not only the winery but other initiatives as well. Another winery in southern Essex county near Harrow is the LeBlanc Estate vineyard, a very small family-owned operation that produces some excellent vintages. Most notably, they have ice wine.

When we talk about the provisions that are going to be provided for in the Vintners Quality Alliance Act, we're really talking about ensuring that there is a very high-quality standard, a government-regulated quality standard, an enforced quality standard, to ensure that

connoisseurs of fine wine in places like Europe and the United States have the assurance that superior products, like ice wine from the Essex county area, for example, are going to meet those very high standards. They can now be assured of that guarantee. This legislation is going to ensure that we're meeting the highest standards of excellence in those products. It's going to be enforced by inspectors who are going to be appointed by a wine authority, and it's going to be established by government legislation.

Just so people who may be watching or who may be reading Hansard at some later date understand what VQA stands for, it's Vintners Quality Alliance. When you see that "VQA" on the top of a wine bottle, that means the wine in the bottle is produced entirely by grapes that are grown in the province of Ontario, as opposed to what might be referred to as "Ontario wine." Ontario wine doesn't need to be 100% produced from grapes grown in Ontario. In fact, that wine could be a blend of around somewhere up to 70% to 75% grapes or juice or wine that's imported from other areas, such as Chile. That's an area where we get a great deal of wine that goes into what is referred to as "Ontario wine" here in the province.

This legislation is going to not only say that it's a VQA wine produced 100% from grapes grown in Ontario, but that it comes from a specific area of the province and because of that area, it is going to have to meet a certain high standard related to geography.

1700

I guess one of the good reasons we want to encourage the wine industry here in Ontario is that it isn't one of those types of businesses that can say, "If you don't reduce my taxes, if you don't reduce the wages for employees, if you don't reduce my expenses, we're just going to pick up and leave and go to some other low-tax jurisdiction." This is an industry that is based in areas of Ontario because of the advantages that they have with respect to weather, the advantages that they have with respect to soil conditions as well, and micro-climatic conditions.

It isn't a business that can just pick up and leave the province and go to some other jurisdiction where they can say, "Well, come here and you can just lower your costs and be able to produce the same product." They can't do that. In order to produce that product, we hope they're going to be able to ensure that we have not only the high standards with respect to the production of the product, but that the people who produce the product are going to have the opportunity to make fair wages and have some sort of long-term job security as well.

Having said that, of course we want to ensure that there is a place in Ontario that is able to sell that product, and I'm referring to the Liquor Control Board of Ontario that this government originally had threatened to privatize, but thankfully they've backed off from that threat and the Liquor Control Board of Ontario is still a viable publicly owned entity in the province of Ontario that ensures that their product is not sold to persons who

are underage. They ensure that there is a large cross-section of these types of VQA wines that are going to be sold throughout the province, and they are going to maintain those high standards and accessibility of those products in the stores as well.

I'm pleased that the government didn't go ahead with their privatization plans for the LCBO. However, I do hope that the government of Ontario does do something with respect to the return of the bottles that are sold from the LCBO so that the large number of glass bottles that end up in the waste stream are going to be collected at the LCBO and disposed of properly or reused or refilled or recycled in some way. But right now there is no deposit on wine bottles. There's really no infrastructure to take the wine bottles back at the liquor stores. I think that is an environmental initiative that this government should undertake as well. Unfortunately, it isn't going to be during this mandate, I can see, because I think we really are on the verge of an election.

As we know, there's the big fundraiser this evening. I know that Tory members are going to be anxious to try and attend a fundraiser where they expect to make \$3 million to be used during the next election campaign for expensive TV advertising, and people can look forward to seeing those TV advertisements very shortly, I am sure.

I can only hope that only the finest Ontario wines are going to be served at that big fundraiser tonight because I, for one, am not going to be able to be there to see whether those wines are there, because I can't even afford one of the cheap seats. I can't even afford one of the \$500 seats that are way back near the exit sign because I'm not in that league — the league of the people who are buying the \$12,000 tables, the people who are getting the biggest benefit from this government, who have the bucks to be able to buy seats at those tables at the big Mike Harris fundraiser this evening.

In closing, before I turn it over to my friend the member for Fort York, I just want to say that I am supportive of the Vintners Quality Alliance Act. I think this is going to be an act that will benefit vintners in the Essex county area and is also going to ensure that consumers have a superior product throughout the world.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): The member for Windsor-Riverside has covered a great deal of ground on this particular issue, so it isn't my intention to speak at length, not too long, just a few points I wanted to make.

Speaker, as you and a few other members know, I enjoy wine a great deal. Others whine; I like to drink wine. I like it from all sorts of places. Wine from Chile, for example, is very good. Australian wine, I've discovered, is quite good, Argentinian wine, of course Italian, and French, naturally. I've got to tell you a story. I was in Portugal in 1987 or 1988 and we had a bottle of wine that was worth about \$5. It was the best wine I have ever had. In fact, the wine was cheaper than the Coke, which was a little more expensive there at the time, if you can believe that. Imagine, to offer you a bottle of the best wine you could have — it was a 1974 bottle of wine.

Mr William Saunderson (Eglinton): Where was this?

Mr Marchese: I know, consternation once again. Its true, 1974 for \$5. It was 1987-88.

Mr Saunderson: Where?

Mr Marchese: Portugal. You're not listening. Speaker, they're not listening.

The Speaker: Would the members listen.

Mr Marchese: It's a good story: a 1974 bottle of wine for five bucks. You can't get it. You can't find it anywhere. It was a great delight for me to be treated thus for a couple of dollars.

I enjoy wine a great deal, and it is for that reason that this particular bill that you fine Tories have introduced is obviously good, acceptable to all of us. Establishing, like so many other countries have, this appellation of origin system for Vintners Quality Alliance wine is a good thing. Our member for Windsor-Riverside has commented a great deal about that, but also made reference to your event this evening.

I drink modestly priced wines because I can't afford the expensive ones. I was lucky with the 1974 bottle of wine. It was just pure luck, because if I'd had to pay the money that bottle would have been worth today, I couldn't afford it. But I can guarantee your friends coming to tonight's event can afford that kind of bottle of wine. I've discovered, through some modest sources not inimical to your government but friends of yours, that the tables to get into this event are more than \$500. I was pointing out, imagine, \$500; most people under \$80,000 won't be able to come and they extend their regrets. I mentioned that earlier. But I understand that these tables bought tonight for this event, where hopefully they will be serving Ontario wines, but I'm sure they could afford more expensive ones — some of the tables are worth \$12,000.

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: Consternation once again, right?

But there is legitimate consternation from the public watching this, because it's live. I find it perverse and I am sure the public listening to this would find it perverse that a table would cost a mere \$12,000 to enjoy the Ontario wine that this bill will benefit, for the audience going to this event tonight. That's a whole heap of money. They're going to need the money, as you know. But it's the previous bill we passed — the loan and trust corporation people are going to be there. I'm sure they bought a couple of tables for \$12,000, a mere pittance for them. The profits have been good the last couple of years. I just wanted to point that out to the public, the three million bucks that the Premier's going to raise tonight versus the \$2,000 or \$3,000 events we raise to bring —

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: You see, consternation again, Speaker. It's true. I'm not whining. I'm just saying that we serve modest wines. We charge \$25 or \$35, depending on the times. I tell you, in my area, even the well-to-do have a

hard time coming to my events, at \$25, 35 bucks, versus —

Interjections.

Mr Marchese: Hold on, hold on — 500 bucks or \$12,000 a table. I want to know who the poor ones are. I want to know who the poor suckers are tonight who are going to pay 500 bucks versus the others paying \$12,000 for a table. Imagine those who can't afford to be there, how poor they are. I tell you, as the \$3-billion ads whack this province back and forth, with everything that this government has done or not done —

Mr Sergio: It buys a lot of wine.

Mr Marchese: This three million bucks is going to buy a whole lot of wine, all right.

Speaker, I know you point to the bill. I have no more to say. This appellation is a good thing. I hope you people enjoy your dinner. I hope it's Ontario wine, modestly priced. I hope you have a good time, to raise enough money to be able to do all the wonderful magic that you have done over the last year with those dollars paid by the Ontario public so you could tell us in four months the things that you're doing. I want to thank you for that and I'm sure the public will thank you. They're sorry they can't make it to the event because they really wanted to be there tonight.

The Speaker: Questions and comments? You can't question and comment on your own speech.

Mr Lessard: You started the clock again, the 20 minutes for the next speaker.

The Speaker: As far as I'm concerned, you split your time, because you told me at the start of your speech that you would split your time. You said at the start of your speech you were sharing your time with the member for Fort York, so ultimately you cannot have questions and comments on your own speech, although I myself have made a lot speeches here that I had questions and comments on. But you can't do that.

Further debate? None?

Mr Lessard: Can I correct the record, Mr Speaker?

The Speaker: You can correct your record, sure.

Mr Lessard: I just wanted to correct my own record. I was referring to the wineries that were in my area of Essex county. I neglected to mention Sal D'Angelo's winery in Amherstburg as well and I wanted to make sure they got mentioned.

The Speaker: Mr Sterling has moved second reading of Bill 8. Is it the pleasure of the House the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation): Mr Speaker, I believe we have unanimous consent to complete third reading of Bill 8 this afternoon.

VINTNERS QUALITY ALLIANCE ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA SOCIÉTÉ APPELÉE VINTNERS QUALITY ALLIANCE

Mrs Ross, on behalf of Mr Tsubouchi, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 8, An Act to provide for the designation of a wine authority to establish an appellation of origin system for Vintners Quality Alliance wine and to administer that system / Projet de loi 8, Loi prévoyant la désignation d'un office des vins afin d'établir et d'administrer un système d'appellations d'origine pour les vins de la société appelée Vintners Quality Alliance.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Mrs Ross has moved third reading of Bill 8. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation): Mr Speaker, I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House now stands adjourned till Monday at 1:30 of the clock.

The House adjourned at 1714.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneur: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Soins de longue durée, ministre délégué aux affaires des personnes âgées	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)
Cambridge	Martiniuk, Gerry (PC)	Hastings-Peterborough	Danford, Harry (PC)
Carleton	Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W. (PC) Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement	High Park-Swansea	Shea, Derwyn (PC)
Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
Don Mills	Johnson, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	Pouliot, Gilles (ND)
Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamarie (L)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
Durham Centre / -Centre	Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail	Leeds-Grenville	Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W. (PC) Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Durham West / -Ouest	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
Durham-York	Munro, Julia (PC)	London North / -Nord	Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne (PC) Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Eglinton	Saunderson, William (PC)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
Etobicoke-Humber	Ford, Douglas B. (PC)	Mississauga North / -Nord	Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John (PC) Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Children's Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (enfance)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Speaker / Président	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L)		
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepean	Baird, John R. (PC)	Sarnia	Boushy, Dave (PC)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)
Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Nickel Belt	Morin, Blain K. (NDP)	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Scarborough-Ellesmere	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Oriole	Caplan, David (L)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Victoria-Haliburton	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, président du Conseil de gestion
Ottawa West / -Ouest	Cullen, Alex (ND)	Waterloo North / -Nord	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Parry Sound	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Willowdale	Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Windsor-Riverside	Lessard, Wayne (ND)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	York Centre / -Centre	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	York Mills	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Hon / L'hon Isabel (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)		
St George-St David	Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

**STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
COMITÉES PERMANENTS ET SPÉCIAUX DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE**

Administration of justice / Administration de la justice

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Dave Boushy, Bruce Crozier, Peter Kormos,
Gerry Martiniuk, David Ramsay, E.J. Douglas Rollins,
R. Gary Stewart, Joseph N. Tascona, Bob Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Tonia Grannum

Estimates / Budgets des dépenses

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
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Ed Doyle, Gerard Kennedy, John L. Parker,
Trevor Pettit, Wayne Wettlaufer, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

**Finance and economic affairs /
Finances et affaires économiques**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
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Monte Kwinter, Gerry Phillips, E.J. Douglas Rollins,
Tony Silipo, Wayne Wettlaufer
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Saurial

General government / Affaires gouvernementales

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
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Tom Froese, Steve Gilchrist, Wayne Lessard,
Julia Munro, John R. O'Toole, Mario Sergio
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
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Bert Johnson, Frances Lankin, Rosario Marchese,
Dan Newman, Joseph Spina, R. Gary Stewart,
Clerk / Greffier: Tom Prins

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Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
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Helen Johns, Allan K. McLean, Gilles E. Morin, Marilyn
Mushinski, Peter North, Jerry J. Ouellette, Gilles Pouliot
Clerk / Greffier: Douglas Arnott

Ombudsman

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Dominic Agostino, Marcel Beaubien, Douglas B. Ford,
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Sandra Pupatello, Bill Vankoughnet, Len Wood
Clerk / Greffière: Susan Saurial

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Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
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Jean-Marc Lalonde, Shelley Martel, Richard Patten,
Peter L. Preston, Joseph N. Tascona, Terence H. Young
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

**Regulations and private bills /
Règlements et projets de loi privés**

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Toby Barrett, Dave Boushy, David Caplan,
Ernie Hardeman, Gary L. Leadston, Tony Martin,
Tony Ruprecht, Derwyn Shea, Frank Sheehan,
Clerk / Greffière: Anne Stokes

Resources development / Développement des ressources

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
David Christopherson, Ted Chudleigh, Sean G. Conway,
Brenda Elliott, Doug Galt, John Hastings, Pat Hoy,
Bart Maves, Peter L. Preston
Clerk / Greffier: Viktor Kaczkowski

Social development / Affaires sociales

Chair / Président: Vacant
Vice-Chair / Vice-Président: Vacant
Marion Boyd, Jack Carroll, Annamarie Castrilli,
Dwight Duncan, Tim Hudak, Frank Klees,
Lyn McLeod, Lillian Ross, Bruce Smith
Clerk / Greffière: Donna Bryce

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No. 6A

N° 6A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 3 May 1999

Lundi 3 mai 1999

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 3 May 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 3 mai 1999

The House met at 1330.

Prayers.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent): Today I am reintroducing an act to protect children on school buses. It has been almost three years since I first introduced my bill: three years of intense lobbying of the government; three years gaining support from local, provincial and national organizations that advocate vehicle liability; three years waiting for the government of Mike Harris to introduce a meaningful deterrent to stop reckless drivers from passing school buses illegally and endangering innocent children. We are on the eve of an election now, and this government has not acted.

We delivered over 30,000 signatures urging Mike Harris to get tough and give the school bus law teeth. This government would make parents responsible for the deeds of their children. It has allowed vehicle liability for red light cameras, the impoundment of vehicles for owners who lend their cars to suspended drivers, and toll collection on Highway 407. Our children are equally important.

I'm proud to have Colleen Marcuzzi here in the gallery with me today. My bill was introduced in memory of Colleen's daughter, Ryan, who was killed by a careless driver who ignored the flashing lights in January 1996. She has been an ardent supporter of vehicle liability.

Pass the bill, Premier. The lives of our children depend on it.

DOCTORS' SERVICES

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): There is a severe shortage of doctors in northern Ontario. The shortage has pitted town against town as councils offer competing incentives to lure doctors away from other northern towns. This competition is unfair and destructive, as different towns have different levels of wealth.

This is not right. The provincial government needs to step in and show leadership. That's what the NDP government did when we were in office. We took the first steps towards a progressive solution with our community health centres initiative. There are four community health centres in northeastern Ontario, the region I represent.

This is good, but it's not enough. Only the NDP government has committed to bring 20 new community health centres to the north.

Why community health centres? Because they work. Community health centres encourage doctors on salary to work with a team of health care professionals. The team works together to treat patients holistically and professionally. They work with community resources to promote health at a community and individual level. Using other health care professionals along with doctors saves money and reduces the workload, the key cause of burnout for northern doctors.

The community health centre is a model that encourages our kids from the north to become doctors in the north. It is both a short-term and a long-term solution. It is good for doctors, patients and communities alike.

Only the NDP has committed \$30 million to help current northern community health centres expand services and establish 20 new centres.

HOSPITAL SERVICES

Mrs Brenda Elliott (Guelph): On April 9, I joined my colleagues the Minister of Health and the member for Wellington at the gauze cutting for phase 1 of Guelph General Hospital's expansion. We saw for the first time the new ambulatory care centre, the diagnostic imaging department and the critical care unit. I am pleased to report to the House that this project is proceeding on time and on budget.

Many years ago, Guelph recognized that its hospital services had to be restructured. It was a difficult but successful process, and today I offer my thanks and my congratulations to all who have worked on this project; in particular, Dr John Pate, who is the chair of the board of the General; the CEO, Richard Ernst; and of course the board members, the staff and the practitioners in the facility.

After years of empty promises from the Liberals and NDP, I am proud to say that it was the Mike Harris government that ensured this facility would be built. Some \$45.9 million has been committed to this project, with the remainder coming from the city and from the county of Wellington.

Through tremendous co-operation, Guelph has shown that restructuring can be a success. By building this long-awaited hospital, the Harris government has clearly demonstrated its commitment to quality care in a stronger Ontario. The building of the Guelph General Hospital is another promise kept.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Over the course of the last four months, our Premier has been travelling across the province almost being a cross between twinkle toes and the sandman. He's gone to municipalities, cities and towns all over the province, spreading a million dollars here, a million dollars there, a million for this, a million for that, trying to get the people of Ontario to forget the nightmares of the last four years that he has inflicted upon the people of Ontario, nightmares like that of Brenda Rantala-Sykes, who had to spend 14 hours in an emergency room, passing out after 12 hours due to dehydration and injuring herself more than she was when she went in for treatment; nightmares like that of Joe Zenha and his family, who had to beg on his knees in front of this Legislature trying to get treatment for his daughter. Day in and day out he knelt in front of the Legislature, begging for the Mike Harris government to do something, and finally they were shamed into it.

Nightmares like that of Erkki Martikainen, who had his simple pacemaker surgery delayed five times — one time too many: Erkki died. The Martikainen family was told that there was something else more important.

Mike Harris, I want you to go out on the campaign trail and you tell the people of Ontario that Erkki Martikainen wasn't worth it. The reality is, at the end of this election period there will be 20/20 vision restored to the province of Ontario.

LANDS FOR LIFE

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): In the time I have spent in this Legislature on both sides of the aisle I have worked very hard to involve people of northern Ontario, as well as other parts of the province, in good forest management planning and, frankly, resource management planning. When we were in government we moved to an ecosystem approach to managing our resources, to ensuring that we didn't just manage for timber, we didn't just manage for fish and wildlife, but we looked at the whole ecosystem.

This government is touting its Lands for Life process which led to what they call the Living Legacy as an answer to the needs for conservation in our province. I would hope against hope that in announcing further protected areas that first, this government has involved the people of the province and the people of northern Ontario in the consultation rather than doing it behind closed doors; and second, that they can ensure there will be good forest management practices carried out on the lands that are still to be harvested.

I fear that in exchange for agreeing to more protected areas, the government has agreed with forestry companies to allow for more monocultures, more clear-cuts, more spraying and less environmentally sensitive management of our resources. In the long run, this will harm us more than if we had never gone through the process in the first place.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: You're a man of knowledge of what's

going on around here. Is the government on strike today? Are you aware of that?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. That's not a point of order.

TAXATION

Mr Dan Newman (Scarborough Centre): I say to the member for St Catharines, we are getting ready to cut more taxes and that's what we're doing.

Last Friday, on tax-filing day, our Premier, Mike Harris, was in southwest Scarborough. I am pleased to say I was joined by my Scarborough colleagues Steve Gilchrist, Marilyn Mushinski and Jim Brown at that event.

For years, families have been working harder and longer, but higher taxes meant that they were taking home less money. Families across Ontario struggled to make ends meet. The higher taxes imposed by the Liberals and NDP only made things worse. In fact, during their reign in government over 10 years we had 65 tax hikes in our province.

In 1995 we stopped the avalanche of increased taxes in Ontario. In fact, we cut taxes 69 times. As a result of our 30% income tax cut a typical family now saves \$1,385, ending the tide of rising taxes, giving hard-working taxpayers a break that has been important.

But there is more to do. There are more taxes to cut. Our Blueprint will lower personal income tax rates by an additional 20%. This will return almost \$4 billion annually to the people of Ontario. Now each family will be able to keep an additional \$615 each year because of our additional tax cut. When both tax cuts are combined the people of Scarborough, and indeed the people across Ontario, will see tax savings of nearly \$2,000.

The debate is over. Tax cuts create jobs.

ANNIVERSARY OF POLISH CONSTITUTION

Mr Gerard Kennedy (York South): It is my honour and privilege to rise today on behalf of my colleague Tony Ruprecht and, I am sure, all members of the House to mark May 3 as Constitution Day for Poland and Polish Canadians.

The 1791 Polish constitution was only the second democratic constitution enacted in Europe, providing for equal rights, universal education and the state care of orphans and elderly. It is the struggle of Polish people for those kinds of rights over the last few centuries which has been an inspiration to the rest of the world and people of my generation, Gdansk and the inspiration that came from that.

I am very pleased to remark that today, for the first time, the Ontario Legislature acknowledged that irrepresible spirit for freedom on the part of the Polish people with a flag-raising.

Today I would like to recognize the people who participated in that: Wojciech Tycinski, the Consul General of the Republic of Poland, who is here with us today as

well some very distinguished Polish Canadians: Chris Korwin-Kuczynski, ward 19 councillor, city of Toronto; Lucjan Conrad, who is the president of the Canadian Polish Congress; Marian Fijal, president of the Polish Veterans Association; Yvonne Bogorya-Buczkowski, president of the Federation of Polish Women; Ken Romanowski, chairman of the board of directors, the Polish parishes of St Casimir/St Stanislaus; Alicia Farmus-Pietrus, president of the Canadian Polish Congress; Juliusz Kirejczyk, Polish Engineers Association; Teresa Klimuszko, community volunteer and singer; Fela Rychlicki, Polish Alliance of Canada; and Lech Prusinski, Polish National Union.

I join everyone in acknowledging Constitution Day.

1340

TAXATION

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Gabriel West is 22 years old. He lives at home and he has cerebral palsy. He suffers from severe seizures that could kill him. He needs 24-hour-a-day attendant care, but thanks to the Mike Harris government cuts, Gabriel West is down to two hours a day now.

His mother, Martha Eleen, is a devoted, loving mother and she has been doing everything she can to get adequate funding for Gabriel, but to no avail. She is getting desperate and is at her wits' end. She has just had to quit her job. She is a single parent and has been trying to hold her family together despite the cuts.

I see that Mike Harris is promising another 20% tax cut on top of the 30% tax cut already given, and those individuals who are in the top 6% are benefiting most from these tax cuts.

When the Globe and Mail comes out with a ringing endorsement, as I saw today, of the tax cuts brought in by the Mike Harris government, they forget about the Gabriel Wests and the Marthas of the world; they forget that these tax cuts are being paid for on the backs of people like Martha and her son Gabriel. Shame on the Globe and Mail and shame on the government.

ROUGE VALLEY

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): Last week the member for Scarborough North stood in his place and claimed that the Liberal government had created the Rouge park. Nothing could be further from the truth. There was still no park at the end of his five-year term when the people of Ontario decided that red was not their colour. His government did little more than make vague promises, much as his party continues to do today.

In fact, no government has done more for the protection of this unique resource than the Mike Harris government. We've gone further than either the Liberals or the NDP, and we've built on a commitment to our natural heritage which was in fact started by another Conservative government under Bill Davis.

As a partner in the Rouge Park Alliance, our government recently announced a number of important funding

and land dedication initiatives in keeping with the commitment to protect the significant natural heritage areas all over Ontario.

Our donations to the park in the last year have totalled \$26.3 million. We're also donating 660 hectares of provincially owned land along the Little Rouge Creek and the main part of the Rouge River in Markham. This land nearly doubles the area of the Rouge park and more than doubles its length.

The past four years have been very energetic and productive ones for those of us who have served on the Rouge Park Alliance. I congratulate everyone who serves on the alliance, including Save the Rouge Valley System and the municipal representatives, for their hard work. I offer special thanks to Mike Harris and the cabinet for their continued commitment to the environment and to our natural heritage, and for their continued confidence in the unique collection of talents and personalities which make up the Rouge Park Alliance.

REPORTS BY COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE ON REGULATIONS AND PRIVATE BILLS

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): I beg leave to present a report from the standing committee on regulations and private bills and move its adoption.

Clerk at the Table (Mr Todd Decker): Mr Shea from the standing committee on regulations and private bills presents the committee's report and moves its adoption.

Your committee begs to report the following bills without amendment:

Bill Pr1, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa;

Bill Pr4, An Act respecting Canada Christian College and School of Graduate Theological Studies;

Bill Pr7, An Act respecting the City of Windsor;

Bill Pr8, An Act respecting the Columbus Club of Sault Ste Marie Ltd.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

TAXPAYER PROTECTION AND BALANCED BUDGET ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA PROTECTION DES CONTRIBUABLES ET L'ÉQUILIBRE BUDGÉTAIRE

Mr Hodgson, on behalf of Mr Harris, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 24, An Act to protect taxpayers against tax increases, to establish a process requiring voter approval for proposed tax increases and to ensure that the Pro-

vincial Budget is a balanced budget / *Projet de loi 24, Loi protégeant les contribuables des augmentations d'impôt, établissant un processus d'approbation des projets d'augmentation d'impôt par les électeurs et garantissant l'équilibre du budget provincial.*

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

PROTECTION OF CHILDREN
ON SCHOOL BUSES ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR LA
PROTECTION DES ENFANTS
DANS LES AUTOBUS SCOLAIRES

Mr Hoy moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 25, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses / *Projet de loi 25, Loi modifiant le Code de la route en vue de protéger les enfants lorsqu'ils sont dans des autobus scolaires.*

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent): This bill attempts to protect the 810,000 children who ride school buses twice daily. It aims to correct the long-standing problem of identifying drivers of vehicles who pass buses illegally by imposing liability on the owner of a vehicle that fails to stop for a school bus with its lights flashing.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE WEEK ACT, 1999
LOI DE 1999 SUR LA SEMAINE
DU WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Mr Wildman moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 26, An Act to designate a week of recognition for the Women's Institute / *Projet de loi 26, Loi désignant une semaine de reconnaissance à l'égard du Women's Institute.*

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): The week beginning the third Monday in February of each year would be proclaimed as Women's Institute Week if this government were to pass this bill.

GAS PRICE WATCHDOG ACT, 1999
LOI DE 1999
SUR L'AGENT DE SURVEILLANCE
DES PRIX DU CARBURANT

Mr Colle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 27, An Act respecting the price of motor vehicle fuel and the appointment of a Gas Price Watchdog / *Projet de loi 27, Loi concernant le prix du carburant pour véhicules automobiles et la nomination d'un agent de surveillance des prix du carburant.*

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): The bill would establish the office of gas price watchdog, to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. The gas price watchdog would monitor and report to the minister on pricing practices in the province with respect to motor vehicle fuel and conduct inquiries into pricing practices on order of the minister. The duties are spelled out in section 3 of the bill.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): Mr Speaker, I would like unanimous consent to introduce a bill on behalf of my colleague Mr Crozier.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

1350

FAIR GASOLINE MARKETING
PRACTICES ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR L'ÉQUITÉ
DES MÉTHODES DE
COMMERCIALISATION
DE L'ESSENCE

Mr Michael Brown, on behalf of Mr Crozier, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 28, An Act to prohibit discrimination in the supply of gas and diesel oil to retail dealers / *Projet de loi 28, Loi interdisant la discrimination dans la fourniture d'essence et de carburant diesel aux détaillants.*

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Michael A. Brown (Algoma-Manitoulin): The bill prohibits wholesale suppliers of gasoline and diesel oil from discriminating unfairly between dealers who are affiliated with suppliers and dealers who are not. Unfair discrimination includes wholesaling to affiliated and unaffiliated dealers at different prices or credit terms and influencing affiliated dealers to set retail prices at or below the supplier's posted rack price to unaffiliated dealers. Suppliers must file their posted rack prices with the director, who must make them public.

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): Is the Solicitor General introducing a bill —

The Speaker: Member for Sudbury, come to order.

Mr Bartolucci: Are you doing it? Why don't you stand up and make a statement?

The Speaker: Listen, I've got some motions I have to deal with. I think probably everyone will want to hear them. I'm sure they'll have to deal with that this week.

MOTIONS

HOUSE SITTINGS

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I move that, pursuant to standing order 9(c), the House shall meet from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm on May 3

and May 4, 1999, for the purpose of considering government business.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried.

STATEMENTS BY THE MINISTRY AND RESPONSES

BALANCED BUDGET LEGISLATION

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): Earlier today, on behalf of the Premier, I reintroduced a bill that, if passed, will ensure the provincial government never spends taxpayers' dollars recklessly again.

The Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act asks that governments not be able to introduce a new tax or raise a tax unless they ask Ontarians if that is indeed what they want. It asks that the provincial budgets be balanced. It asks, simply that governments of all stripes treat taxpayers' dollars as carefully and as conscientiously as they would their own and that they not be allowed to spend their way into debt and then casually increase taxes to pay for their spendthrift ways.

We must always remember that this money is not our money, it's theirs, Ontarians', taxpayers', and we have a trust to handle it wisely and well.

When our government took office three years ago, we inherited a situation where we were spending \$1 million more an hour than we were taking in. Since then, we have worked hard to balance the budget, and we are on track to balance it by the year 2000-01, just as we promised.

We cannot condone a situation — the taxpayers cannot condone a situation — whereby, after all the hard work and the tough decisions of the past three years, future governments could tax and spend and drive that deficit up again.

This act proposes that governments receive the voters' permission before introducing any bill that imposes any new tax or increases the rate of personal income tax, corporation taxes, retail sales tax, employer health tax, gasoline or fuel tax or education property taxes. That is real taxpayer protection.

This act also proposes that beginning with the 2001-02 fiscal year, a deficit may only be run in extraordinary circumstances, such as a natural disaster or war.

Under normal circumstances this legislation proposes that the budget must balance. If not, there would be a personal financial penalty for the Premier and members of cabinet, with up to a 50% reduction in their executive council pay. We would be held accountable.

This bill is not unreasonable. It simply proposes that governments do what average working families do every day across Ontario: balance their budgets, pay their debts and spend within their means.

Spending within government's means does not mean simply raising taxes or taking away even more money from families' take-home pay. Ontarians deserve more. They deserve better.

Each of us who pays our taxes — those of us in this Legislature and the working men and women of this great province — would much rather our tax dollars be spent on health or education or children's services than on servicing a debt. Each of us would rather our children and our grandchildren not be held accountable for the debt of past generations.

The Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act is the toughest and most comprehensive of its kind in all of Canada. Ontario deserves no less.

Mr Gerry Phillips (Scarborough-Agincourt): I'm pleased to respond to the bill. I'll start by pointing out that Mike Harris still hasn't balanced a budget. He's not going to balance a budget, I gather, tomorrow. It will be March 31, 2001, before Harris will balance a budget. Quebec will have beat Ontario by two years. Newfoundland will have beat Ontario by two years. Every province in Canada except BC will have balanced budgets.

The last time a Conservative government balanced a budget, the people of Ontario should be aware, was 1969. Premier Harris was in the cabinet through the early 1980s. He never came close to balancing a budget, so an election must be close at hand. I think Ontario understands that. In the next few days Harris will bring in this balanced budget legislation but he hasn't come close to balancing a budget.

I remember in the last election that great photo opportunity of Mike Harris promising balanced budget legislation immediately. I remember that picture. All the candidates were very proud of it. Now we find it's going to be March 31, 2001, before there's a balanced budget.

I want to go on to talk a little bit about the debt. I don't think Ontarians appreciate that Mike Harris has added 25% to the debt of the province of Ontario. He's had his hands on the financial reins now for about four years. The way you find that number is to simply look in the budget. When he became Premier the debt of the province was \$88 billion; now it's \$110 billion. He's added 25% to the debt of the province of Ontario.

I realize that Mike Harris says the tax cut is very helpful. We have had to borrow every single penny for the tax cut: \$9.6 billion. Where does that number come from? From the government's own budgets. They lay out the lost revenue for all the tax cuts. We have lost \$9.6 billion of revenue. There's no magic to this. Harris goes out and borrows \$9.6 billion for the tax cut. Ontarians have paid \$800 million just to service the increased debt as a result of the tax cut.

I know people at home are saying, "I like the tax cut," but we've had to borrow every single penny for that. My background is business and I guarantee you that there'd

be no bank in Canada that would loan this company called Ontario money to give itself a dividend when it's still running significant deficits.

We have the legislation. Ontario should recognize that in 1995 Harris signed this pledge: Immediately he'd have balanced budget legislation. We now find it will be March 31, 2001, before the budget is balanced. We have seen 25% added to the debt of the province. We find that we still don't have a balanced budget and I gather, as I say, it will not be this coming fiscal year, it's going to be the following year. Quebec will have beaten Ontario by two years. We have had to, as I say, borrow every single penny in order to fund the tax cut. So we find legislation introduced that was promised to the Canadian Taxpayers Federation. I remember they held a huge press conference for Mike Harris because he said, "I'll introduce this legislation immediately."

What we're finding is that as the election comes around Mike Harris is now saying, "I made a mistake on cutting \$870 million out of the hospital budget." It has caused dramatic problems to our health care system. We're paying the price for that. He has acknowledged that he has caused turmoil in the education system, but it is too late. He has caused that turmoil in the education system.

We now find that we have had to borrow to pay for the tax cut. He has added 25% to the debt of the province of Ontario. I think Ontarians realize that here we are on the eve of an election, and Harris has now added enormously to the debt of the province. He's gone out and borrowed all the money for the tax cut and we finally get something he promised four years ago: balanced budget legislation.

Ontarians are not going to be fooled. This is the same old Mike Harris who has caused so much turmoil in Ontario.

1400

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): It's interesting to see that the government is trying this same old phony announcement again. They tried this phony announcement just before Christmas, and then through their own ineptitude they killed their own bill on the order paper. Now they're going to introduce it and never pass it.

I listened to the Chair of Management Board's words today lecturing people on fiscal rectitude. Is this the same party that has put Leslie Noble on the payola like never before? Is this the same party that's taken care of Tom Long? Is this the same party that's taken care of Mr Trbovich? Public money at the trough for Conservative friends? Now you're lecturing someone?

Is this the same government that wants to give \$188 million to Andersen Consulting so they can go around the province attacking the poorest people in the province? The auditor says it is the most blatant government contract he's ever seen put out. Is this the government that wants to pay off its friends, Cara Operations, with an additional \$2 million of taxpayers' money?

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Come to order, please.

Interjection.

The Speaker: And Lake Nipigon.

Mr Hampton: Is this the same government that's going to payola its friends, Cara Operations, with an additional \$2 million? Anyone who has looked at the contract can't justify it.

This government that believes public money is nothing more than a trough for Conservative Party hacks and Conservative Party friends: You're going to lecture people on fiscal rectitude?

They talk about balance and balanced budgets. We want to ask about the balance. Where's the balance when our hospital and health care system is a billion dollars behind where it needs to be, where hospitals have had to rack up a debt of \$1.7 billion because of this government's underfunding? Where is the balance when municipalities across the province are trying to figure out what they are going to do as a result of this government's downloading, first, and then ridiculously stupid tax changes, second?

I have a small municipality in my riding of 4,500 people that is \$1 million behind the eight ball because of this government's downloading and financial ineptitude. The community of Atikokan has no idea how a government could stick them with \$1 million in two years and then walk away and talk about fiscal and financial rectitude.

Is this the government that is leaving behind chaos in the education system, special education which is underfunded, children with special needs who can't get the help they need?

Is this the government that says they can afford more tax cuts and meanwhile children's mental health gets no attention whatsoever and children's treatment centres are strictly left out of the picture?

Is this the government that's going to talk about balance when colleges and universities in Ontario now are funded at virtually the lowest level per capita in North America? Every other province in Canada funds their colleges and universities on a more generous basis per capita than Ontario, even poor provinces like Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island. In the North American context, Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas invest more in post-secondary education on a per capita basis than this outfit.

Then we have the environment, Ontario now with the reputation of being one of those places where, if you've got a mess and you want to ship it somewhere to hide it, to bury it, ship it to Ontario, because Ontario will take it.

Today we have the disclosure that this government is so attentive to housing policy that we've now got a shortage of 64,000 units in the province in terms of people who need housing but can't get it.

To listen to a lecture about financial balance from this government, which is going to leave behind environmental deficits, health deficits, education deficits and social deficits, makes you want to run for the bathroom. The reality is that the only balance in their picture is this: They've got lots of money for tax cuts for the well-off,

and they've got even more money for their friends at the trough. That's your definition of balance.

I say to my Liberal friends, you like to complain about the tax cuts, but you won't —

The Speaker: Thank you.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Member for Hamilton East, thank you. Member for Lake Nipigon, don't argue with me.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): I'd like to ask a question of the Acting Premier, whoever that is today. Mr Hodgson? Acting Premier, I want to talk to you about a backroom deal your government has just endorsed. It's one of the most blatant backroom deals we've seen in recent years, and it's costing Ontario taxpayers \$3 million. It deals with Ontario Place. They decided to look for a \$50-million food services contract. You would think the best bid would win, but it didn't happen. In fact, one of the bidders, Vincent Ciaravino, said: "The rules were changed to suit someone's purpose, and that was wrong. I was basically tossed out on my ear so the big guys could come in. The whole thing stinks." This is what one of the bidders said.

In this contract here, despite what the general manager of Ontario Place, Max Beck, said and despite what the experts said, your appointed hacks to the Ontario Place board overruled the experts, fired the general manager for objecting and signed a deal that was \$3 million short for the taxpayer.

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): It's my understanding that the deputy minister for the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism has had his officials fully involved in the selection process and that he has indicated the process conformed with and adhered to all government contracting guidelines.

It's also my understanding that the deputy minister has indicated that the preferred provider's proposal was absolutely in the best interests of the taxpayers in every respect.

It is my understanding that the board chair declared his conflict and did not vote and did not comment on the selection of the preferred proponent.

These are the facts as I understand them. If members of the opposition have any information to indicate otherwise, I would invite them to bring it forward so it can be reviewed.

1410

Mr Colle: Minister, let me again be clear on what has happened. The bid your Tory hacks on the Ontario Place board overruled is \$3 million short for the taxpayers. It so

happens that the chairman of the board, Mr Jim Ginou, is a golfing buddy and chief fundraiser for your party. Would that have something to do with the fact that the Ontario Place consultant and the general manager were overruled, in light of this \$3-million shortcoming for the Ontario taxpayer? Is that why the experts and the general manager were overruled?

Hon Mr Hodgson: As I mentioned before, it's my understanding the deputy minister has indicated that the preferred provider's proposal was absolutely in the best interests of the taxpayers in every respect.

Mr Colle: Again, the experts hired by Ontario Place, the general manager and staff, said that this bid that was put forward by your friends at Cara Operations — I'll quote from the consultant: This is "about the weakest presentation and weakest effort that we have seen in our 14 years of operating in this industry."

You tell me how this weak proposal that was \$3 million short got the nod from your hacks at Ontario Place. Will you tell me why you won't ask or call for an inquiry to see why they got this sweetheart deal? Why don't we have an inquiry and see who's really right?

Hon Mr Hodgson: As I've mentioned before, and as I've presented to this House already, those are the facts as I understand them. If members of the opposition have any information to indicate otherwise, I invite them to bring it forward so it can be reviewed.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): My question is to the same minister, the Acting Premier. The Ontario Place contract is not the first time we've seen taxpayers' money go to the elitists of Ontario, the friends of Mike Harris. We'd like to also mention people like Leslie Noble, the Common Sense Revolution writer, who walked away from Ontario Hydro with a consulting fee of \$91,000, and we can't find what she did for that; Tom Long, the Tory campaign manager, author, key strategist — \$250,000 of taxpayers' money from Ontario Hydro. Part of his job was to write speeches at the cost of \$650 an hour. How about Paul Rhodes, the director of propaganda for the Premier, receiving \$225,000, again from Ontario Hydro, for producing a 10-page fax?

Acting Premier, could you stand in your place today and explain to the taxpayers of Ontario, how do you rationalize that kind of largesse for Mike Harris's friends at the expense of everyday people in Ontario?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I understand that the opposition's intent is to throw mud against the wall and hope some of it will stick, but if not, at least they've got their message out. All those allegations you're raising have been raised before. There have been explanations and answers given. It's important to remember that this government has come in and cleaned up a lot of the duplication, waste and inefficiency in the government. We are open to looking for new ways to find efficiencies that benefit the taxpayers. A lot of change has taken place.

Mrs Pupatello: Acting Premier, let me list a few more for you: Bill Farlinger, a key Harris loyalist, in a \$300,000 position at Ontario Hydro as his payback for

being the loyalist. That's in addition to '\$138,000 in expenses per year.

Let me go on. Jim Ginou, mentioned earlier, a key Tory fundraiser, a top dog at Ontario Place, is also the chair of the Toronto Olympic bid, with co-chair, another Tory Harris pal, Steve Hudson. Barbara Minogue, Mike's best friend, now sits as co-chair of the Charitable Gaming Allocation Working Group, responsible for doling out \$100 million of charity money across Ontario.

Mike Harris is like Robin Hood in reverse. I'd like you to stand in your place today and explain to the taxpayers of Ontario how you rationalize this largesse for the elite of Ontario and Mike Harris's friends at the expense of everyday people who need hospitals and schools.

Hon Mr Hodgson: I would just caution you to think twice before you impugn the reputation of people and companies that have had good reputations in this province, have worked hard on behalf of the people of Ontario and taken on some tremendous responsibilities and brought about a lot of positive change to this great province.

Mrs Pupatello: Everyone's acknowledged that Bill Farlinger is in a ceremonial position at Ontario Hydro in an enormous salary position, in addition to a huge level of expenses every year. But let me go on. As payback you're stacking every board and committee in Ontario with the Mike Harris friends. You are spending taxpayers' money in a sense that no one would ever have believed of you, especially you because you said you were different. You said you wouldn't waste taxpayers' money. Instead you're spending \$100 million on propaganda advertising for a re-election campaign for Mike Harris, not to mention \$180 million on Andersen Consulting with the lid completely off on excess expenses.

To the Acting Premier today, I want you to stand in your place and answer the question for everyday people: How do you explain this kind of largesse at taxpayers' expense when everyday people need hospitals and children need textbooks in schools? How do you rationalize this kind of expense at the cost of the taxpayer?

Hon Mr Hodgson: The member is correct to state that this government has taken taxpayers' money and is managing it in a more responsible fashion than previous governments. She brings up the example of advertising. I would challenge you to compare our total spending on advertising versus your total when you were in power. You'll find that we've saved the taxpayers over \$100 million from your spendthrift ways.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Housing. Today, we have a new study by co-op and non-profit housing providers that shows that thanks to your government, more Ontarians than ever before are staring at the abyss of homelessness. Your government cancelled co-op and not-for-profit housing. You said the private sector would build hous-

ing. The fact of the matter is that private developers haven't built the housing. We need 80,000 units of new housing over the next five years. The private sector is only prepared to build 6,000. The private sector won't build, can't build and isn't interested in building housing for modest and lower-income families. Your income tax reductions for the well off haven't helped lower- and middle-income families. How do you expect them to find housing? Do you have another promise to give them?

Hon Al Leach (Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing): We probably could do a whole lot more with housing if we had the use of some of the \$9 billion that went on their housing boondoggle over the past five years. This report, *Where's Home?* was prepared by the same people who were at the trough for all of those years. I think all they want to do is create a situation where they can get back to the trough.

For example, let's just use some of the numbers they've used in the report to see what a bad-news story we have here: city of Kitchener, 1989-94, rent increases of 17%, under their watch; 1994-98, rent increases of 6% while we had inflation of 7% from 1994-98 — not a bad-news story. Let's pick another one here: North Bay — lovely town — vacancy rate, 5.8%; rent increases, 1994-98, 3%, inflation 7% — another good-news story. Thanks for the report.

Mr Hampton: Four years ago we said this minister he was completely lost and four years later we're able to confirm that.

The question was, we need 80,000 units of affordable housing in this province. The private sector is not building it. This means that on top of the families that are now homeless we're going to see more homeless families.

1420

I have a copy of the current issue of Canadian Business magazine. On the cover it says, "Meet Your Next Landlord: Boardwalk's Sam Kolias is taking over Canada, apartment by apartment."

Inside we learn that Mr Kolias has \$1 billion and he intends to buy up lots of apartments in Hamilton, London and Ottawa and that he then wants to use your rent decontrol act to dramatically increase the rent. On the apartments this gentleman owns in western Canada he increased the rents by 15% last year.

Minister, what's going to happen to those modest-income families, lower-income families and middle-income families if this is your only plan for housing in Ontario?

Hon Mr Leach: That is why we kept the rent control guidelines in place, so we could protect tenants while they're in their homes, and we will continue to do that.

I know nothing of the magazine the leader of the third party was holding up. If someone has \$1 billion to invest in Ontario, they're certainly welcome. Any time somebody has \$1 billion that they want to invest in the fastest-growing province in the country, the fastest-growing community in all of North America, \$1 billion is a welcome investment. I hope he gets here in a hurry, and we'll have rules and regulations to ensure that tenants

continue to be protected regardless of who owns their building.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Final supplementary.

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): Minister, your government's wilful neglect borders on social criminality. That's what it is. I've got to tell you the real answer: real rent controls and a program that builds non-profit housing and co-operative housing. That's the real answer to the problem. That's what we propose instead of your plan for homelessness.

We've got to stop people like Sam Kolias before he creates more homelessness. In Hamilton and Ottawa, two of the communities Mr Kolias is targeting, over 20% of tenants already pay over 50% of their income in rent. That's the reality and that means those people are in danger of being homeless.

He laughs. The question to you and your government, Minister, is this: Do you want to stop people like Sam Kolias or do you want to see more people out on the street?

Hon Mr Leach: I'd like to quote a little bit more out of the report, in response to the member for Fort York, and just what a terrible situation the province is in.

In Ottawa, 1989 to 1994, while the NDP was in power, rent increased by 27%. Then the Conservatives came to power. From 1994 to 1998, rent increased by 2%. During that same period, inflation was 7%. Is that an isolated incident? I don't think so.

Let's talk about Peterborough, another example they show as to how things have gone to hell in a handbasket. Vacancy rate in Peterborough, 4.9% — quite a healthy vacancy rate. The rent for a two-bedroom in 1998 increased from 1994 by only 4% while inflation again was 7%.

Your own report, produced by the people who were responsible for the boondoggle in the 1990s, shows that things are pretty good in Ontario today.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My next question is for the Acting Premier. Over the last four years we've asked question after question about the appearance of conflict of interest, shady backroom deals and influence peddling in your government. Year after year, deal after deal, it keeps happening again and again.

We don't understand how it is that you have no money for hospitals, no money for colleges and universities, no money to protect the environment, but when it comes to rewarding Conservative Party friends, just open up the trough.

So we aren't surprised to hear about the fiasco at Ontario Place. What is surprising is this: When the Ontario Place board chair, Conservative Jim Ginou, was asked about his apparent conflict of interest, he is quoted as saying: "I have no interest in any particular one (company). So, I'm so conflicted, maybe I'm not conflicted." In other words, he has so many interests in so

many different companies, he's so conflicted that he doesn't feel he's conflicted any more. Is that your definition of "conflict of interest," Minister?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): First of all, the premise is completely wrong. This government has had the courage to cut taxes and create growth in the economy, and with more people working we've had more dollars to invest into health care and into classroom education. That's a point that he has been totally wrong on and is consistent on. He is opposed to every tax cut to create this growth and this re-investment into health and into education.

In response to his overall other allegation that he's misguided on, it's my understanding that the board chair declared his conflict and did not vote and did not comment on the selection of the preferred proponent.

Mr Hampton: You must be the only person in Ontario who believes that.

Minister, after four years of your government, I don't think the public is surprised that corporations can buy influence with your government. In fact, Cara operations, which is at the trough on this one, is number 13 in the top 30 corporate contributors to the Conservative Party. The least they gave in terms of money was \$26,000 over the last two years.

But what the public would really be surprised to learn would be that you don't confine it just to your private sector friends, that you and cabinet ministers in your government actually go out there and solicit funds from school boards, from hospitals, ambulance services, municipalities, universities and colleges. In other words, it's like this: This government provides some funding to hospitals and municipalities and then they say to the hospital and municipality, "If you want more funding, you'd better show up at the Conservative fundraiser and you'd better write the cheque."

Minister, do you think it's appropriate that you and your cabinet colleagues not only, on the one hand, control the funding of hospitals and school boards, but on the other hand take political contributions from them?

Hon Mr Hodgson: In regard to the specific innuendo and allegations here, it's my understanding that the Deputy Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism has had his officials fully involved in the selection process, and he has indicated that the process conformed with and adhered to all government guidelines. It is also my understanding that the deputy minister has indicated that the preferred provider's proposal was absolutely in the best interests of the taxpayers in every respect.

Mr Hampton: My first question was about a Conservative government hack who believes that if he's in so many conflicts of interest, then he's so conflicted that it's not really a conflict of interest. I didn't get an answer there.

The next part of this is that I've got a list here of municipalities, hospitals and ambulance associations that have all been making contributions to the Conservative

Party and Conservative cabinet ministers. My point is this: You control the funding to these people. You're the government that has been saying to hospitals, "We're going to cut your funding." Now we find that Brock University, for example, has been contributing \$1,600; Cambrian College of applied arts, \$233; Niagara College of applied arts, \$2,518; Metro Patient Transfer Services, \$1,600; Scarborough General Hospital, \$1,067. These are all contributions from public bodies.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question.

Mr Hampton: Is this appropriate, Minister, that public bodies — school boards, hospitals, colleges — should be contributing money to Conservative Party candidates, Conservative cabinet ministers —

The Speaker: Thank you. Minister?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'll repeat it again for the member if he didn't think he got an answer: It is my understanding that the board chair declared his conflict and did not vote and did not comment on the selection of the preferred proponent.

In answer to his other statement, that colleges and some hospitals and others made contributions to the Conservative Party, I would remind him that political contributions are made to all parties by organizations of all types, of their own accord. So if they're saying they agree with the policies of our government and they want to see that continue, to build on the success we've seen in this province for the last four years and to make sure we stay on the right track, I think that's fine.

1430

SERVICES FOR THE DISABLED

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I have a question for the Minister of Community and Social Services. Minister, I'm sure you remember my constituent Veronica Manuel, who's been struggling to keep her multi-disabled son, Dylan, at home. She wants him there because she loves him dearly and she truly believes that it is there that he'll continue to be cared for in a loving way. However, Ms Manuel has been faced with horrendous roadblocks by this government in her attempts to keep him at home and she's become worn down by the incredible inflexibility shown by this government.

But now another problem has emerged which may force Veronica to throw in the towel. Ms Manuel recently found work as a special education support worker. She was able to do this because Dylan spends the day in a multi-needs school in Thunder Bay. The problem is that Olsten Health Services, the private nursing service that visits Dylan at his school, say they will no longer provide the care he needs to stay at school.

Minister, there's no reason for them to deny him this care. Neither the school nor the CCAC can understand their refusal. My question to you is, will you intervene so that Dylan can receive the care he needs and enable Veronica to keep her beloved son at home?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I'll refer this question to the Minister of Long-Term Care.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors): I'd like to thank the honourable member opposite for his question. I'd like to inform the members of the House that at all times it is important and necessary to protect the privacy rights of this individual. Therefore, I cannot comment directly —

Interjection.

Hon Mr Jackson: The former leader of the Liberal Party implies that there is no such privacy law to protect the families.

The point I wish to share with the House is simply — first of all, I want to assure this House that under no circumstances is an agency allowed to withdraw services. Those decisions are made by community care access centres, all 43 in the province.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.

Hon Mr Jackson: Second, I want to assure all members of this House that there is a range of options which this government has pulled together to allow persons with disabilities —

The Speaker: Supplementarily.

Mr Gravelle: The Minister of Community and Social Services should be ashamed. She should have answered it. She met with Veronica about a year ago and did nothing.

The real question here is, how can this be allowed to happen? How can a company obligated to provide the service deny it to Veronica and Dylan? You just wash your hands of responsibility once the contract is signed? Is this what privatization means?

Veronica does not want to give Dylan up to the children's aid society or anyone else, but she's exhausted, demoralized and simply worn out from all the battles she's had to fight. You and the Minister of Health and the Minister of Long-Term Care, all of you, need to accept responsibility for what will happen if Dylan cannot stay at school.

Minister, my question to you, again, is — and I pray you'll accept your responsibility here — will you guarantee that Dylan's needs will be met at school, and will you at least speak to Ms Manuel personally to let her know she'll continue to receive this service? It's the least you can do. The CCAC says there's no reason to refuse this service. That answer will not do.

Hon Mr Jackson: I want to make it very clear one more time to the member opposite that the community care access centres are prescribed under legislation in order to ensure that these services are in place. The province of Ontario —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Minister?

Hon Mr Jackson: The services that families who have a disabled child in care receive is a basket of services provided from a series of ministries. This is very well known to the member opposite. The community care

access centre provides home care, provides in-school service support. The Ministry of Community and Social Services provides additional support. The fact of the matter is that even in this province we allow individuals to receive the direct funding —

Interjection.

Hon Mr Jackson: The member opposite would like to learn something about —

Interjection.

Hon Mr Jackson: Mr Speaker, if he does not want the answer to this question I am endeavouring to share with him — this is an important issue and his level of understanding should be enhanced about this important case.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Minister?

Hon Mr Jackson: No government in Canada has a program which directly compensates a family member for the care of a child. That does not exist in our country. We do have direct funding to individuals with disabilities once they achieve their 16th birthday. That is a program our government has implemented. We will continue to review this file and many other of these important cases that are challenging families who are working with disabled children.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I have a question to the Minister of Natural Resources. We understand your ministry has produced a document regarding harvest allocations guidelines written by a John McNicol. The document is interesting, because it will allow forestry companies to clear-cut our forests far in excess of the 260 hectares which is now permitted as per the terms and conditions of the timber management environmental assessment. I will remind you, Minister, that those terms and conditions have the force of law.

We're also told that the MNR is directing forestry companies now to use the guidelines for their harvesting purposes, even though your ministry is refusing to release the document to the public.

Will you table these guidelines in the House today and will you confirm that your staff is indeed directing forestry companies to break the law by exceeding the clear-cut limits which are in place today?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): I thank the member opposite for the question. I can assure you that my ministry is not encouraging anyone to break the law in the province of Ontario.

Ms Martel: We know that planners for forestry companies have been told by MNR staff not to release the document to members of the public who are interested in forest management planning at the local level. We also know that several MNR regional directors have advised that this document cannot be released to the public until after the election. It appears that the clear-cut guidelines were created solely to buy the support of the forestry companies for your Lands for Life process. If

that's true. Minister, then it means you've cut a sweet-heart deal with the forestry companies, you're proposing to break the law to allow huge and illegal clear-cuts, and you're going to do that all at the expense of those of us who live in northern Ontario. Can you confirm, do the guidelines exist? Will you table them? And why are you prepared to break the law on clear-cuts in Ontario?

Hon Mr Snobelen: Let me assure the member opposite that we have absolutely no intention of breaking the law. I am sure the ministry would never counsel anyone to break the law. I believe her concerns are without substance.

I can say that we do have a new forestry accord, which you've mentioned. We do have a new agreement, which you've mentioned, that creates 378 new parks and protected areas in the province, something like six million acres now protected for future generations that weren't before.

Although there have been concerns expressed, I note that Tim Gray said this on the weekend:

"New Forest Accord Gives Public a Voice.... Yes, the Ontario forest industry is powerful, but for the first time the public is getting a better shot at having a meaningful say in our forest's future because of the forest accord," because of this government.

1440

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Mr Trevor Pettit (Hamilton Mountain): My question is for the Minister of Community and Social Services. I understand the number of people on social assistance in Hamilton-Wentworth has declined. Would you please tell the House and my constituents high atop Hamilton Mountain how much of a decline there has been and how much this has saved the taxpayer?

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I'd be very pleased to answer the member's question, and I thank him for it.

I had the privilege of meeting with the Hamilton-Wentworth folks not too long ago, to meet one of the community agencies that have been successfully providing community placements for people on social assistance so they can get opportunities to become employed again. We have in Hamilton-Wentworth a wonderful record. They've done a superb job. There has been a 36% decline in the number of people who have been trapped on welfare in this region, which is clearly a tribute not only to the efforts of the regional staff but to our workfare program and to the economic growth in that region. That has saved \$86 million for taxpayers there. Again, it's a win-win story all around.

It's very consistent with what we're seeing across the province as Ontario Works, our mandatory work-for-welfare program, has rolled out across the province. We have approximately 374,000 fewer people on welfare today than we did four years ago. We know that the majority of those individuals have left for jobs, and not

just any jobs. They have left for jobs that are full-time and pay more than —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary.

Mr Pettit: That's great news, and it's certainly beneficial for the taxpayers of Hamilton-Wentworth and the province. Minister, can you please tell us of other programs that the government has implemented that will help even more people move off welfare?

Hon Mrs Ecker: We've had great success in getting folks from welfare into jobs to date. We've had about 12 people an hour leaving the welfare rolls.

As we have people with additional barriers to employment who need more help, we have our LEAP program, which is a program for teen parents on welfare that gives them additional supports and mandatory rules to keep them in school and to give them skills to be better parents.

In our Blueprint document, which is our vision for Ontario that we will be putting out to the people, we have talked about having even further programs; for example, remedial education for those who have literacy or basic skill problems with reading or math, and also for those with drug addiction problems. That is another barrier to employment, and we will be dealing with that through special mandatory addiction programs.

Our goal is to get people off welfare and into paid jobs. We've had great success to date. We know we need to do an even better job and we're prepared to do that, unlike the opposition parties, which fought us every step of the way.

EDUCATION FINANCING

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): My question is for the Minister of Education. The parents of children attending Gorham and Ware school in the Thunder Bay district have been given a rather incredible challenge. They've been told that they have a month to find a community solution to avoid having 50 students from their rural school bused into the city to fill up vacant spaces in the downtown core.

This is not a school being closed; it is a school community being divided. It is a direct result of your rigid and inflexible funding formula that demands that all vacant spaces anywhere in a school district, even one as large as the district served by the Lakehead Board of Education, have to be filled before there is any funding given for new pupil spaces.

Minister, I ask you today, what would you advise these parents? Would they agree, do you think, to having some of their children bused into the city's schools out of their own community, or would you have a better alternative to suggest to them that would be a community solution?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): As in all cases of this nature where school boards have authorities and have responsibilities to make decisions within their communities, I would advise the

parents and the school council members, for example, but all members of the community, to work with the local officials, the school board elected trustees, the staff at the school board, to make the best possible decision for the children. That's really what the bottom line is: making the best decision for education in all of our communities, whether it's Thunder Bay or anywhere else in the province.

Communities across Ontario are working with each other to ensure not only the best quality education in terms of the curriculum etc, but in terms of accommodation, and I would suggest that the parents do that in Thunder Bay.

Mrs McLeod: You know full well that the board of education in the Lakehead has no alternative at all. They are already closing schools in the city. They can't close them fast enough to fill up all of the spaces so that they will ever get any new money to put an addition on a rural school that's bursting at the seams.

The problem with this school is that those children are in a portable that has mould. The children have to be moved, and you're not providing any money to fix the problem of mouldy portables either, so the board has no alternative to keep the children in that school. The parents of Gorham and Ware school are considering an alternative. They are considering building their own addition, doing the work themselves to make sure their school can house all of the children in their community.

Minister, you, because of your formula, are absolutely refusing any other alternative to be considered, so I ask you: Will you scrap the formula? Will you give the Lakehead board and other boards the flexibility and the money they need to be able to keep children in their community school so that this school doesn't have to be split up? Or do you think the parents should build their own school?

Hon David Johnson: To the Lakehead District School Board, and I guess that's the board in question, the ministry has provided almost \$100 million this year for various purposes, including over \$1.5 million for school renewal to deal with situations within the schools that need to be attended to in maintenance repair activities.

School boards have various options in terms of funding additions or new schools. Our funding formula will fund 200 new schools in Ontario over the next couple of years, and that is unprecedented in the province of Ontario through Liberals years, through NDP years, over the last many years. We are endeavouring to be as fair as possible through the funding formula for all the needs of all the students in Ontario.

ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Mr Peter Kormos (Welland-Thorold): I have a question to the Minister of Citizenship. Last week, as she knows, the Ombudsman released her final report on the timeliness, or non-timeliness, of the Ontario Human Rights Commission's investigative process. That report

was a damning indictment. The Ombudsman found not only that the problem is worsening, but that your cuts, all to finance the tax giveaway for your wealthy friends, have seriously undermined the enforcement of human rights in Ontario.

Now we've learned that the support staff in Ontario Human Rights Commission regional offices have received pre-notice of layoff. You are eliminating all the support positions outside of Toronto and effectively closing those offices to the public.

Minister, how is firing support staff going to make things run smoother or any faster?

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): First of all, I want to make it clear that this government, since we took office, has maintained the \$11.2-million budget of the Ontario Human Rights Commission. We say and we believe that if human rights are to be preserved and protected in Ontario, we must have an efficient system for managing Human Rights Code complaints. It is fundamental.

That said, in order to keep abreast of the times — after all, I say to the honourable member opposite, we are in 1999, approaching the millennium — we must keep updated. To that end, we have taken over a system that was outdated in many ways in terms of its lack of computerized records, and we now have a centralized, one-window service for inquiry, referral and intake —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.

Hon Ms Bassett: — and a highly successful mediation service that has speeded up complaints.

To that extent, we have had to look at some of the offices —

The Speaker: Supplementary.

1450

Mr Kormos: Minister, this sounds oh so much like your colleague the Attorney General when he was trying to defend his gross mismanagement, his negligent mis-handling of the family support plan. Please don't leave here with the same blemish that he will.

Don't tell us about your support for the commission. The Ombudsman made it very clear: Your cuts mean more and more people won't bother going to the commission, because they're not going to be serviced. These are people who are facing discrimination in this province. In communities like Timmins, London, Hamilton and Thunder Bay, if a person goes to their local Human Rights Commission office to get some advice or make a complaint, they get confronted by a locked door, and they already have to wait over half an hour. Try calling the number, please, to speak to someone at your 1-800 number.

Once again, we saw what happened when your government shut down regional offices for the family support plan. It created chaos and misery for thousands of people. When are you going to stand up for human rights in this province and stop the slashing of this essential service in our communities?

Hon Ms Bassett: We are standing up for human rights in this province. When people lodge a complaint

today, compared to when you were in office, I might say, (1) 50% of all new cases that are closed are resolved by mediation; (2) 70% of complaints going to mediation are resolved quickly, usually within six months of the complaint being filed, and that's a lot better, I can say to the member opposite, than happened in your day; (3) 60% of all complaints filed are resolved within six months; and (4) for the third year in a row, more complaints were resolved than were filed. In other words, we are digging into the backlog that I inherited when I became minister.

Thank you for the question so I can set the record straight.

TAXATION

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): My question is for the Chair of Management Board. I spent the weekend in my riding consulting with many constituents.

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Member for Simcoe Centre.

Mr Tascona: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

It seems that everywhere you go these days people are fed up with the amount of taxes they pay each year to government. The feedback I received came from many diverse sources: small business owners, middle-class families and single mothers with young kids, just to name a few. Their call is universal: They appreciate the benefit they received from our 30% cut to provincial income tax and they want to see more.

I was happy to inform my constituents that our party's platform, Blueprint, contains good news on the tax-cut front for many hard-working Ontarians.

Can you provide my constituents with detail on the proposed tax cuts?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): It's a very good question and very relevant.

The Mike Harris government's track record on tax cuts is very clear, as you and maybe some of your constituents are aware: 69 tax cuts in four years, including a 30% personal income tax cut six months ahead of schedule. As you will recall, two thirds of the personal income tax cut has gone to the low- and middle-income earners with annual incomes between \$25,000 and \$75,000. The lowest-income earners received a tax break of just under 50%, and 140,000 more low-income earners now pay no income tax at all. That's great news for Ontario.

Our tax cuts have resulted in the creation of 540,000 net new jobs in just four short years, ahead of schedule to meet our goal of 725,000 over five years.

Blueprint: Mike Harris' Plan to Keep Ontario on the Right Track offers even further tax relief to grow our economy, to create more wealth to put into services that the Ontarian people deserve and need, like health care and education. It's only through tax cuts that create a strong economy that you'll have the dollars to provide for those priority services.

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr Tascona: I think you'll agree that it's clear that our Premier, Mike Harris, is firmly committed to continuing to lower Ontarians' tax burden. It takes strong leadership to stand up to the special interests and cut taxes to grow our economy and create jobs. It's equally clear that Dalton McGuinty is a weak leader who lacks the strength to put the needs of middle-class Ontarians ahead of the special interests, ahead of the union bosses. Can you tell me what Dalton McGuinty's position on tax is?

Hon Mr Hodgson: Another good question. I think it's pretty clear that our Blueprint to keep Ontario on the right track, to build on the success of the last four years, recognizes, along with just common sense, that the tax cuts have created a strong economy and create the growth needed to reinvest and to put more emphasis and dollars into health care and education.

We know quite clearly what the NDP's position is. The NDP, to their credit, have been quite honest and forthcoming. They believe, and they're quite clear about it, in higher taxes. They've made that abundantly clear.

The question you're asking is, what is the Liberal position on this? I think if you take a look at the quotes of the Liberal leader, he said that this province can't handle more tax cuts. That was in the Toronto Sun, April 30. "I'm not in favour of a tax break." Another quote: "I wouldn't give you a tax cut."

I think the bottom line is, the Blueprint that Mike Harris is offering Ontarians to keep them on the right track and build on the success of the last four years offers a 20% personal income tax reduction combined with —

The Speaker: New question.

DOCTORS' SERVICES

Mr Dominic Agostino (Hamilton East): My question is to the Minister of Health. We have a serious situation in Hamilton in regard to waiting lists for cataract surgery and a shortage of facilities and physicians to perform them. There are currently 10 physicians who perform an average of 40 surgeries a week. Right now there's a waiting list of about 2,000 people and an average waiting time of about 12 months in Hamilton-Wentworth for cataract surgery. You've moved and made the political decision to address the problem in Burlington because of pressure, obviously, from your minister or colleague there. You have addressed that to some degree. Clearly, the same level of political influence is not there in Hamilton with the Tory backbenchers, because Hamilton has been ignored.

We're talking about 2,000 people, 12 months, many seniors in a community next door and you have failed to act. A simple question: Do you believe it's acceptable today in Ontario, under your government's policies and cuts, that senior citizens have to wait up to 12 months for cataract surgery and 2,000 people are currently on this waiting list?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I'll pass that to the minister.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors): I want to advise the member opposite that this government has been working very hard to expand access to new services. It's interesting that the member from Hamilton is now standing on his feet trying to explain away the fact that it was his political party that refused to go after the federal government to repatriate the \$2.8 million they clawed back. It was Mike Harris and this Minister of Health who said we were going to put the additional \$900 million directly towards front-line surgery.

I want to advise the member opposite that this government has worked actively with the OMA to improve access to cataract surgeries by making sure that we have enough ophthalmologists who are moving to underserved areas. This government has already put in place an opportunity for them to rise above their current cap in order that they can perform more surgeries. All these have been put in place to improve access to cataract surgery, not only in our region but across Ontario.

Mr Agostino: I'm surprised that the Premier announced a cabinet shuffle. We missed it, because I asked the question of the Minister of Health about eye surgery and she passed it on to the junior minister of health. I don't understand that.

Minister, again, let's go back to this: There was a political decision made to give special services and special consideration to Burlington. It was a political decision there with a waiting list. Then the Minister of Health ducks the question and turns it over to her colleague, who made an announcement on her behalf.

I want to go back to you, Minister. You are the Minister of Health. Last time I checked, cataract surgery and those types of services in hospitals fall under your jurisdiction, unless you've given that up to the other minister.

Let me go back to you again. There is a long waiting list: 2,000 people, 12 months. You've ignored it. You've done nothing about it. Clearly, political dealing has allowed Burlington to be given special consideration; Hamilton has not. You have treated the people of Hamilton as second-class citizens. You've ignored the needs of our seniors. You've ignored the needs of 2,000 people, who are waiting up to 12 months.

Again I want to ask you, since you are the minister and make those decisions, do you believe it's acceptable today that people have to wait 12 months for cataract surgery because of the lack of space, operating rooms and ophthalmologists in Hamilton?

1500

Hon Mr Jackson: I'm surprised the member opposite is unaware that this province has put in place a program to deal with underserved physician services. There is a process in which there is an application. In this instance, ophthalmologists from Halton region have made an application because there are insufficient numbers of physicians performing this important surgery. The fact

that there is no application from Hamilton, to our knowledge, is the issue. The member opposite is trying to drive a wedge between the two communities.

The fact is that we have very good, capable, competent ophthalmologists operating in Hamilton and in Halton region. The truth is that we don't have enough of them. This government has moved to work co-operatively with the OMA in order to address the issues of raising the cap. We've moved co-operatively to deal with underserved areas. The announcement you've referred to is no announcement at all. The government is processing that application, under appeal, and we're prepared to look at any opportunity we can to improve access to cataract surgery for seniors, not only in this region but any region in the province.

NATIVE FORESTRY ISSUES

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): My question is for the Minister of Natural Resources. The minister will know that the community of Grassy Narrows, which is a First Nation in northwestern Ontario, has had some serious differences with your ministry and some serious differences with Abitibi-Consolidated forest products company. Abitibi-Consolidated wants to harvest the forest very close to the First Nation reserve boundary and within the First Nation's traditional territory. Members of the community have demonstrated publicly against this. They have written to you. The chief has written to you. They have asked you to intervene. They've asked you to meet with Abitibi-Consolidated and to act on their behalf to get Abitibi-Consolidated to move off of their proposed harvesting plan.

You have a responsibility to try to ensure that not only forest companies are able to operate but that other interests and other values are also protected. What are you prepared to do to assist this First Nation with the problem that has arisen?

Hon John Snobelen (Minister of Natural Resources): As the leader of the third party has indicated, the law is very clear on this in that certainly obligations to the First Nations and treaties have to be adhered to inside of these planning scenarios, and the companies which are involved in sustainable forest licences have to work, by law, with the First Nations and come to agreements. I'm sure that's what will happen in this case.

Mr Hampton: The fact of the matter is that members of the community have had to launch public protests. The fact of the matter is that they have written to you to try to get you to respond; you failed to do that. They have tried a number of avenues to get your attention and the attention of your officials, and they have tried a number of means to get the attention of Abitibi-Consolidated.

My question was, what are you prepared to do to not only protect the interests of the forest company but also to protect the trapping interests, the wildlife interests, the interests of this First Nations community? Is it going to take added protests? Is it going to take further demonstra-

tions? Will it take the kind of event that happened at Aroland First Nation with respect to Buchanan Forest Products to get you to observe and to assume some responsibility for the other issues which also fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Natural Resources? What are you going to do in this instance, or is it going to take another protest, another demonstration such as Aroland?

Hon Mr Snobelen: The leader of the third party is perhaps uniquely aware of some of these disagreements that happen from time to time during sustainable forest licences. I think he would be aware of that. I believe he's aware of the fact that both the First Nation communities and the forest companies have a reputation for being able to solve these issues, being able to resolve these issues inside of the law, which is as prescribed.

I can tell the member opposite that we have, with the new forest accord, a new opportunity to bridge the needs of First Nations communities, the needs of the forest industry, the needs of the hunting and fishing communities and the needs of the public to make sure our natural resources are protected in the future.

This is a unique opportunity made possible by a very historic accord between these very diverse communities. We now have the opportunity to do that in the future, and I'm proud of that.

WINE INDUSTRY

Mr Bart Maves (Niagara Falls): My question is for the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. The economy in Ontario has undergone a renaissance under our government's term in office, with the creation of 540,000 net new jobs and 400,000 people off dependency and welfare. I'm proud to say that my region in Niagara has benefited greatly from this renaissance in this government's term in office. We've had a 50% reduction in our welfare load in our area. Our unemployment rate was 15.3% in 1993; it's down to 6.6%, leading Ontario and I'm very proud of that.

One of the areas that has helped very much in this job creation in our region is the wine industry. Last Thursday the House passed the Vintners Quality Alliance Act which you had reintroduced on the previous Monday. Minister, can you tell the House how this act will help the wine industry even more?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): To the credit of the Legislature, we passed the VQA legislation last week. This is a tool the wine industry very sorely needed to be competitive. As people know, the economic union in Europe has basically tried to block Ontario wines from access to the European markets. I suppose, in a way, that's a credit to our industry here, because if our wines didn't have the fine quality they did, I don't believe the European nations would be concerned at all about the competitiveness of the Ontario wine industry. As you probably know, it's not simply our icewines that are at the top of the world scale right now, but also we're winning gold medallions at places like Vinexpo in

France, which is like the Olympics of wine; in Italy for our other wines as well.

This is a very valuable tool that they needed. As we all know, the European nations are throwing up all kinds of artificial barriers to keep wines out of Europe. This is one of them, this is the main one, and I really believe that because of my wine caucus who are heavily involved with this — Tim Hudak, Bart Maves, Tom Froese, Frank Sheehan and Jack Carroll — the work they've done with the wine industry has been an essential move for us to do this.

Mr Maves: Thank you very much, Minister. That is much appreciated. In the face of the lack of any kind of help from the federal Liberal government in trying to get our wines access into those foreign markets, the Ontario government has stepped in and taken this very wise and forward-looking step.

Another issue that we fought very hard for — myself, and as you mentioned in the wine caucus, Tom Froese, Tim Hudak and Frank Sheehan — for a little while now is the issue of allowing our wineries direct delivery to Ontario restaurants and bars. Greatly appreciated: You were in Niagara on Friday to announce that for the province of Ontario. I know it was very well received from the vintners and the grape growers of our region. Could you also explain how this will affect the wine industry in the province?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I thank the member for Niagara Falls for the question. As an example of some of the old policies that have been in place for a number of years, this one goes back past 10 years ago. Essentially it charged the cost to the wine industry for service provided. This was flagged by Frank Sheehan and the Red Tape Commission and was highly supported by the wine area caucus. If this can be considered a tax, I guess this is the number 70 tax this government has cut, which is very important.

Let not me talk about this; this is what the industry is talking about. The grape growers indicated that this policy will create 200 more jobs in the industry. Linda Franklin of the Wine Council of Ontario estimates that Ontario wineries will grow from about the current number right now, 30 wineries, to over 200 wineries, a great boost for the Niagara region. Len Pennachetti of Cave Spring Cellars said, and I'll close with this, "This government has done more for the wine industry in one day than any previous government during their entire term."

1510

PETITIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): This petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the major oil companies in Ontario have had a free rein to gouge consumers by raising prices

together at the same time and by as much as 30 cents per gallon; and

"Whereas the Conservative government of Mike Harris has taken no meaningful actions to protect consumers from the practice of rising retail gas prices immediately before long weekends; and

"Whereas the Premier has refused to call the captains of the oil industry to account for uncompetitive pricing practices; and

"Whereas the provincial government has within its power and jurisdiction the power to take action against uncompetitive pricing policies by the big oil companies;

"Be it therefore resolved that the members of the Legislative Assembly support and pass quickly the predatory pricing bill introduced by the MPP for St Catharines to ensure that independent retailers are not driven out of business by the pricing practices of the major oil companies."

I affix my signature, as I'm in full agreement.

FOREST INDUSTRY

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): I have a petition here addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario in regard to the employment of Quebec residents in the company's woodlands department to transport our wood resources to the province of Quebec. The company's five-year plan is to ship 50% of its wood limit to Quebec in exchange for our wood resources. More employment will be created in the province of Quebec through the process of making finished products and transporting wood chips back to the company in Ontario, Abitibi-Consolidated."

This petition is signed by over 300 working men and women in the towns of Iroquois Falls, Timmins, Porquus Junction and throughout the north. I affix my signature to the petition.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): In the last few weeks I've been visiting a number of schools in my riding. We have an excellent education system in Ontario, but it came to my attention, when talking with Principal George Petrusma of Knox Christian School, and Fred Spoelstre from Durham Christian High School — they presented this petition to me and I'm pleased to present it:

"Whereas this government has undertaken to reform the system of education funding to ensure fair funding for Ontario's children; and

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has stated that, 'The province could, if it so chose, pass legislation extending funding to denominational schools other than Roman Catholic schools without infringing the rights guaranteed to Roman Catholic separate schools'; and

"Whereas providing our children with an excellent education consistent with our cultural and religious beliefs is a necessity and not a matter of preference; and

"Whereas independent schools successfully educate children across the entire spectrum of learning abilities and special needs; and

"Whereas all children of taxpaying Ontario parents deserve to have funding distributed in a manner that does not discriminate against those not using the public/Catholic systems;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, respectfully request that the government take immediate steps to extend fair funding to all students of the province."

I'm pleased to support this petition.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): I have a petition that reads as follows:

"Whereas essential public services have been deprived of government funding because the Conservative government of Mike Harris has diverted these funds to self-serving propaganda in the form of pamphlets delivered to homes, newspaper advertisements and radio and TV commercials;

"Whereas the Harris government advertising blitz is a blatant abuse of public office and a shameful waste of taxpayers' dollars;

"Whereas the Harris Conservatives ran on a platform of eliminating what it referred to as government waste and unnecessary expenditures while it squanders over \$100 million on clearly partisan advertising;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government and Mike Harris to immediately end their abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising."

I affix my signature, as I'm in full agreement with this petition.

RECYCLING

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): I have a petition. It reads as follows:

"Our family is concerned about the future of Ontario's environment. We know that one-way plastic pop bottles and aluminum cans waste non-renewable resources and energy, create pollution, and 1.5 billion of them end up in a landfill or as litter every year in Ontario.

"We know that recycling the other half a billion of them is costing us too much money, and that our blue box program is suffering as a result. To try and save their recycling programs, hundreds of municipalities, representing over 80% of Ontario's population, have passed council resolutions in support of a deposit return system for beverage containers. We also know that a deposit-return system with refillable bottles works well all over the world and is possible for Ontario. We did it before and we can do it again. We ask you to support legislation

to implement refillable bottles and a deposit-return system for Ontario."

This petition has been done by the grades 4 and 5 students at C.R. Judd public school in Capreol, and I want to thank them for their interest in this important matter.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr Joseph N. Tascona (Simcoe Centre): I have a petition to the Parliament of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Whereas it is important to honour the courageous memory and sacrifices of Canada's war dead and of our veterans who fought in defence of our national rights and freedoms;

"Whereas there is a need for succeeding generations of young, school-age Canadians to learn more about the true meaning of Remembrance Day;

"Whereas Ontario veterans' associations have created excellent educational materials for use in Ontario schools on the meaning and significance of Remembrance Day;

"Whereas a special Remembrance Day curriculum for all grades in Ontario's education system, developed on the basis of the programs by Ontario veterans' associations and involving their direct participation, would increase awareness of, and appreciation for, Canada's wartime sacrifices in the hearts and minds of all Ontario citizens;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Parliament of Ontario as follows:

"That the provincial Ministry of Education and Training ensure that a suitable Remembrance Day learning unit be included in the curriculum of all grades of Ontario's education system."

There are hundreds of names on this petition brought forth by the Canadian Legion and also the army-navy. I'll affix my signature.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Mike Colle (Oakwood): This petition for equity in education funding is from residents of the city of Toronto.

"Whereas the government of Ontario and all political parties represented in the Legislature strongly believe in a tolerant society in which religious and cultural differences are respected and services are provided without discrimination, as reflected in section 1 of the Human Rights Code;

"Whereas this government has undertaken to reform the system of education funding to ensure 'fair funding' for the education of Ontario's children;

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed that the province of Ontario has the power to extend funding to denominational schools;

"Whereas five other provinces — BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec — provide public funding to denominational schools;

"Whereas Catholic parents in Ontario enjoy the right to educate their children in an education system" run by their community "consistent with Catholic values and fully supported by their education tax dollars;

"Whereas our education tax dollars are already used to support special education programs based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, as well as French immersion programs, without posing a threat to mainstream public education;

"Whereas experience shows that a system that in effect forces religious and cultural minority parents to educate their children in a secular school system threatens the continuity of many of these communities;

"Whereas providing our children with an appropriate education in a context consistent with our cultural and religious values is a necessity and not a matter of preference;

"Whereas denominational schools successfully educate children who are overwhelmingly from low- and middle-income Canadian families and representing the entire spectrum of learning ability and special needs;

"Whereas all parents in Ontario paying taxes for education deserve to have that funding distributed in a manner that does not discriminate against those who for conscientious reasons are unable to use the secular public education system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, respectfully request that the Legislature and the government take immediate steps to extend equitable funding to denominational schools."

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr Bob Wood (London South): I have a petition signed by 102 people from across the province.

"Whereas children are exposed to pornography in variety stores and video rental outlets;

"Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposures to pornography;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To enact legislation which will create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to pornography in retail establishments; prevent minors from entering establishments which rent or sell pornography; restrict the location of such establishments to non-residential areas."

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mrs Sandra Papatello (Windsor-Sandwich): This is to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas essential public services have been deprived of government funding because the Conservative government of Mike Harris has diverted these funds to self-serving political propaganda in the form of pamphlets delivered to homes, newspaper advertisements and radio and TV commercials;

"Whereas the Harris government advertising blitz is a blatant abuse of public office and a shameful waste of taxpayers' dollars;

"Whereas the Harris government ran on a platform of eliminating what it referred to as government waste and unnecessary expenditures while it squanders over \$100 million on clearly partisan advertising;

"We, the undersigned, call upon the Conservative government of Mike Harris to immediately end their abuse of public office and terminate any further expenditure on political advertising."

I agree with this petition and I will be signing it.

1520

FIRE IN HAMILTON

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition that reads as follows.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas two years ago Hamilton was the site of one of the worst environmental disasters in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Plastimet fire raged for three days in a residential area of Hamilton, releasing furans, large quantities of heavy metals and other dangerous chemicals, and consuming 400 tonnes of plastic, including polyvinyl chloride, PVC, which releases extremely toxic substances such as dioxins which are thought to cause cancer and disruptions to endocrine systems; and

"Whereas the city of Hamilton declared a state of emergency and a one-day evacuation of area residents because of fears about airborne toxins; and

"Whereas the government has cut funding to the Ministry of the Environment by more than 35%, and laid off over 750 people" who used to work to protect our environment; and

"Whereas we urgently need a public inquiry to find whether these cuts played a role in causing the Plastimet fire, whether the evacuation process was adequate, if residents and workers received adequate warning of the danger, are there ways to improve responses to these life-threatening fires, and how to prevent the nightmare of other Plastimet fires in all our communities; and

"Whereas for the past two years the Harris government has steadfastly refused to hold such a public inquiry or listen to municipalities, labour organizations, environmental groups and firefighter organizations who have all urged the government to hold a public inquiry; and

"Whereas the Harris government has allowed corporate polluters like Plastimet to operate with virtual impunity in a climate of deregulation, or industry self-regulation, along with cuts to monitoring and enforcement mechanisms;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to put the health and safety of the people of Hamilton before the interests of corporate polluters, and immediately hold a full public inquiry into the Plastimet fire."

I continue to support my constituents by adding my name to their petition.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Mr Bill Grimmett (Muskoka-Georgian Bay): I have a petition that I'd like to present today. It has been signed by 58 people from my riding. Rather than read the petition, I will instead comply with the standing orders and just summarize it by saying that the people signing this have asked that a suitable Remembrance Day learning unit be included in the curriculum of all grades of Ontario's education system.

I submit this petition today.

GOVERNMENT ADVERTISING

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): The petition reads as follows:

"Whereas the Minister of Education took more than \$1 billion out of Ontario's education system at a time when there was increasing consensus on the importance of supporting our schools and classrooms; and

"Whereas per pupil funding in the province of Ontario now ranks below other jurisdictions, such as Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri and Nebraska; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government has now embarked upon a new advertising campaign which will cost the taxpayers of Ontario millions of dollars; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris commercial does not constitute an important public announcement and instead is clearly an abuse of public funds, because," as is the case with all of these commercials, "they are self-serving political messages which are designed to influence public opinion; and

"Whereas the Mike Harris government could cancel the advertising campaign and use the millions of dollars which belong to the taxpayers of Ontario for the purchase of 40,000 textbooks," or thousands of educational employees to be hired, or on new equipment;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, call on the Mike Harris government to cancel its blatantly partisan, self-serving political advertising campaign and redirect the taxpayers' millions of dollars to classroom funding."

I affix my signature, as I'm in complete agreement with the sentiments expressed in this petition.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Toni Skarica (Wentworth North): "Whereas this government has undertaken to reform the system of education funding to ensure fair funding for Ontario's children; and

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has stated that the province could, if it so chose, pass legislation extending funding to denominational schools other than Roman Catholic schools without infringing the rights guaranteed to Roman Catholic separate schools; and

"Whereas providing our children with an excellent education consistent with our cultural and religious beliefs is a necessity and not a matter of preference; and

"Whereas independent schools successfully educate children across the entire spectrum of learning abilities and special needs; and

"Whereas all children of taxpaying Ontario parents deserve to have funding distributed in a manner that does not discriminate against those not using the public Catholic systems;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, respectfully request that the government take immediate steps to extend fair funding to all students of the province."

I have hundreds of petitions with thousands of signatures, and I affix my signature as well.

OPPOSITION DAY

TAXATION

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): This is an opposition day motion:

That this House declares its opposition to the Mike Harris income tax cuts, which put \$4.1 million a day into the pockets of the top 6% of Ontario taxpayers, who unfairly receive 25% of the tax cut, and urges that this money be reinvested immediately in hospitals, schools, colleges and universities, environmental protection, housing and other vital services.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Mr Hampton moves opposition day number 1. I recognize the member for Rainy River.

Mr Hampton: The first thing I want to note is that, as the opposition motion was written, there was a typographical error. What was written was \$1.4 million a day." It should be \$4.1 million a day. That is in fact the amount of money that is taken out of hospitals, schools, colleges, universities and communities on a daily basis in order to fund the Harris government's tax cut for the most well-off 6% of people in this province. The reality is that when you sit down and do the math on this government's 30% tax cut, 6% of the people who are at the top of the income and wealth ladder receive over 25% of the money. They receive \$4.1 million a day, which is being cut from these very important health, education and community services. It works out to \$1.5 billion a year.

Middle- and modest-income families, on the other hand, receive very little, if any, benefit from this income tax scheme. In fact, if you travel across the province and you talk to middle- and modest-income families and you say to them, "What did you get from the tax cut?" most of them look at you as if to say, "What tax cut?" Many others will guffaw and will say, "Well, whatever it was, it disappeared a long time ago." That's because, for lower-income families, there was no income tax cut. There are frankly more and more user fees, copayment fees, administrative fees, tuition fees, property taxes and higher rent, so that anything they were supposed to receive out of this so-called tax cut has been more than

overwhelmed by all of the new hidden taxes, all of the user fees, copayment fees, administrative fees, higher rents, what have you.

For middle-income families, it may be a wash in some cases; that is, what you put out in the new tuition fees, what you pay in the higher property taxes, what you pay in prescription medicine copayment fees might balance out with what you were supposed to get from the income tax cut. But even there, if you're a family and you have two children, two young people, in college or university, you're left trying to figure out: "This is what I was supposed to get from the tax cut, but tuition fees have increased by more than \$1,600 a year, so the tax cut would have to give me \$3,200 a year just to pay the tuition fees," not to mention the increases in property taxes, not to mention all of the other copayment fees and user fees that have been placed on middle- and modest-income families by this government.

It's very clear when you sit down and you do the math of this, after this so-called tax cut, which is really a tax shuffle, is finished, lower-income families are paying more taxes than ever. Middle- and modest-income families might, if they're lucky, be in a balanced situation; that is, they got a little bit of a tax cut and now they're trying to figure out how to pay the tuition fees. I would suspect that most don't even get to the balanced situation; they're still paying more in taxes. It's only when you get into the highest income brackets that people actually got a tax cut.

1530

I could recite for you some of the people who got a tax cut. For example, Frank Stronach, who has an income of about \$25 million a year, gets a \$1-million tax cut. Some of the bank and financial institution presidents and vice-presidents and chairpersons actually get tax cuts of even more than that from this government. This is overwhelmingly a tax scheme, a tax shuffle, designed to benefit the well-off at the expense of the rest of us in society.

The biggest cuts of all to finance this so-called income tax scheme have come from health care, from education, from the community services that the vast majority of people in this province need and have to have if they're going to be able to function productively and effectively in our society.

What is to be done in a scenario where the government has deliberately, intentionally, strategically, from their point of view, taken money from the essential services — the hospitals, the health care system, the elementary and secondary schools, the colleges, the universities, our communities. They've taken money from these very important institutions and transferred it to people who are well-off in the form of a tax cut. They've transferred it to people who frankly have enough wealth, who don't require any more.

I know what these folks over here, the Conservatives, are going to do. They're going to continue down that line. They're going to continue to underfund education, they're going to continue to underfund health care,

they're going to continue to underfund colleges and universities, they're going to continue to underfund municipalities, they're going to continue to underfund environmental protection in order to transfer more wealth to those who are already well-off and those who don't need any income transfers. That's the direction they're going to pick.

My Liberal colleagues historically in this place have criticized the Harris government's tax cuts. They've said, "The money from these tax cuts is coming out of health, it's coming out of hospital budgets, it's coming out of school budgets, it's coming out of colleges, it's coming out of universities, it's coming from the poorest people in the province. Our Liberal counterparts have been quick to criticize the Harris tax cut and to say it's wrong, to admit it's wrong to take money from these vital health care services and education services and transfer it to people who are well-off. They admit it's wrong, but then, when you listen closely, you discover that our Liberal counterparts won't do anything about it. They want to complain; they know it's wrong. But when it comes down to looking at what's actually happening, they're not going to do anything about it. They would institutionalize and continue to implement this scheme of tax cuts by the Harris government.

At the same moment, Liberals say they would reinvest in health care, they would reinvest in education, they would reinvest in communities. You don't have to be a wizard to understand that if you're going to continue to finance this scheme of income tax cuts, which cost, as I point out, \$4.1 million a day just for the 6% at the top, there isn't any money left over for education, there isn't any money left over for schools, there isn't any money left over for hospitals, there isn't any money left over for the rest of the health care system. It doesn't work.

I take you back to the spring of 1995, when Mike Harris said to people — and I believe I've got his argument pretty clear — "I'm going to give you a 30% tax cut. There will be no cuts to health care. There will be no cuts to education. The money is going to come from somewhere over there." Voters believed that; people believed that.

The lesson of the last four years is that there was no "over there." The money to finance their so-called 30% income tax cut, the \$6 billion a year, came directly out of hospitals, directly out of health care, directly out of education, directly out of our communities, directly from the poorest people in the province. There was no "over there." The lesson is that that money came out of those things we value the most: health care, education, our communities. That's what Mike Harris said, though: "A 30% tax cut. No cuts to health care; no cuts to education. The money will come from somewhere over there."

I want people to think very clearly about what Liberals are saying today. Liberals are saying: "A 30% tax cut. There will be money for health care, money for education, and the money's going to come from somewhere over there." Does that sound just a little bit familiar? It sounds to me like the same argument, the same agenda,

the same direction that Mike Harris set in 1995. The words have been changed a little, the packaging has been changed a little, but it's the same agenda.

It would seem apparent to me that the income tax scheme that is responsible for taking over \$2 billion a year out of health care, responsible for taking \$1.5 billion out of elementary and secondary education, responsible for taking \$750 million out of our colleges and universities, responsible for downloading over \$700 million in costs on to municipalities, the same agenda that is responsible for that — and that's been very much the Mike Harris agenda — can't possibly restore this. Simply rolling and repackaging that agenda that has cut health care and has cut education cannot possibly result in the re-funding, the restoration of health care, of education, of environmental protection, of the community services we all value and need.

We know where the Conservatives are coming from. The Conservatives are saying: "We're going to continue on this line. We'll continue to create an education deficit. We'll continue to create a deficit at the college and university level. We'll continue to create an environmental deficit. We'll continue to allow a health care deficit, a homeless deficit, a deficit at the municipal level to build up."

Their priority is to cut taxes for those of us who are most well-off and who need a tax cut the least. The problem we have is that Liberals want to complain about what the Harris government is doing but Liberals have already indicated they would do much the same thing. They would continue this regime of a 30% income tax cut no matter what the damage to education, no matter what the damage to health care.

New Democrats cannot abide by this. We simply cannot abide by a direction which is going to underinvest, underfund health care, underfund education, underfund our communities, underfund the protection of the environment. It's clear what the priorities of people in this province are. They want to have a good health care system. They want to have a good education system. They don't want to have colleges and universities that rank at the bottom in North America in terms of public funding. People want to see reinvestment.

We've heard the public. We are prepared to reinvest in those most important of our public services, those services which help to make us all productive, those services which are going to help position us to be even more productive in the so-called knowledge economy. How do we do it? We do it this way: Since the only people who got a tax cut are the 6% at the top who get 25% of the money — those are the only people who got a tax cut here; everyone else is paying the tuition fees, the user fees, the copayment fees, the higher property taxes — it seems only fair that we restore some balance to this. So we make this commitment to people: New Democrats would roll back the top end of the Harris income tax cut. To the 6% at the top who get more than 25% of the money, we would say, "You too have a moral and a social responsibility to help us fund the health care

system we need, the education system we all need, the community services we all need, and New Democrats are going to help you meet your moral and social responsibility."

What it means: We would roll back the income tax scheme for the 6% at the top who get 25% of the money. That would give us \$1.5 billion a year to put back into health care, back into education, back into the community services we all need, back into the protection of the environment. Those are the things that are the priorities of people. They are the things that are going to contribute to our ongoing productivity, and New Democrats are committed to absolutely seeing this happen.

1540

I just want to say a word about folks who say to you: "The money is over there. Don't worry, the money will be over here somewhere." I've heard some folks say, "We'll ask the federal government for more transfer funding." It's worth reviewing the federal transfer funding. The current federal government took \$3 billion a year, on an annual basis, out of health care funding. The current federal government took \$3 billion a year, on an annual basis, out of education funding. In the last budget they put back a little bit of the health care money; they put back a fraction of what they took out. The fact of the matter is, they haven't put back what they originally took out; far from it. The fact of that matter is, on the education front they haven't put back any of the \$3 billion they took out.

So saying that the federal government is somehow going to restore this funding I think has no foundation in reality. The federal government is guilty of some of the worst underfunding of our health and education institutions in this province and in this country. This business about "somewhere over there" just rings very, very hollow.

Let us just say another word about how serious this is. Most people in Ontario are probably proud of the college and university system that was created in this province after the end of the Second World War. A number of governments have helped to contribute to that. Conservative governments, albeit of a much different stripe from this Conservative government, made some strategic investments in colleges and universities. Liberal governments contributed. New Democratic governments contributed.

Most people in Ontario would be shocked today to know that Ontario now ranks dead last in Canada in terms of per capita funding for our college and university system. We rank last after Newfoundland, after poor provinces like Prince Edward Island, after smaller provinces like Nova Scotia or Manitoba or Saskatchewan — dead last in terms of per capita funding.

Not only that, but if we look at the North American context, there are only two states in all of the United States that fund their college and university system at a lower per capita level than Ontario. New Hampshire and Vermont are the only states that fund at a lower level, and there's no accident there; there's a reason for that.

New Hampshire and Vermont have a relatively large number of private colleges and private universities. But in terms of all those states in the United States and all those provinces in Canada that rely on a public education system, we rank dead last.

We rank behind American states that have traditionally had a problem with literacy, states like Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, even Arkansas. It is a very shocking situation; even more shocking when you consider the fact that we now live in a knowledge economy.

Over and over, economists are telling us that it's not inexpensive natural resources which are going to create prosperity and help us be productive in the world ahead, it's not being close to this market or that market. Goods move around the world, natural resources are available in many corners of the world. It's not necessarily having your own pool of capital; capital now moves around the world. What determines, more and more, whether you're going to be a participant in this new knowledge economy is the knowledge, the skill, the ability of your people.

But the knowledge, the skill, the ability doesn't grow on trees. Knowledgeable, thoughtful, capable people have to have an investment made in them. They have to have an investment made in their education. But that's not happening. It's not happening under this government, it's not going to happen under this government, and any government that buys into this very unbalanced, unfair and, I would argue, unprincipled tax shuffle is not going to see it happen either.

If that tax scheme is going to be your foundation, if it's going to be your obsession, your fascination, there isn't going to be money left over for the health care investments, the education investments, the environmental protection investments, the community investments that are the foundation of being productive in that knowledge economy.

New Democrats say clearly, consistently, in all corners of the province, that education is where we must make the investment, health care is where we must make the investment, strong communities is where we must make the investment. We will roll back the top end of the Harris 30% income tax scheme, which benefits the 6% at the top with over 25% of the money. We will roll it back and we will make those investments in health, in education and in community that will provide the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people.

Mr Speaker, I'm aware that others here want to take part in this debate. I thank you and other members for the opportunity to put this on the record and to begin what I believe will be the debate of the election campaign which is officially soon to begin. It will be the theme of the election campaign: Do Ontarians want tax cuts which come at the expense of a well-funded education system, a well-funded health care system, communities that work, environmental protection? Do Ontarians want that or do Ontarians want the reinvestment in hospitals, schools, colleges and universities and our communities and the protection of our environment which will make us more

productive? We're very happy to kick off that debate here today.

The Deputy Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Rosario Marchese (Fort York): It's a pleasure to continue with the comments and the theme our leader has already addressed.

I want to refer to an article that I read just a short while ago that speaks to this very issue. It says here: "During the Tory mandate up to December, the province has added 470,000 jobs. About 73,000 of them came before any tax cuts." Then it says: "Another 332,000 would have come if jobs were added no faster than in the rest of the country. That leaves 65,000 jobs to be debated." It asks, "Have the tax cuts made the big difference?" The comment he makes is: "The consensus among economists and financial analysts is no. They say a lot of other factors combined to outweigh the importance of the cuts." For example: "A 22% cut in the size of Ontario's welfare cheques in 1996 negated any economic stimulus from tax cuts for that year. The government, basically, took from the poor to leave more for the others."

This is where we say we are transferring the wealth from the poor to those who don't really need the money. We're not talking about just those who make \$100,000 here — because that's what we're talking about: \$80,000 taxable income, which means \$100,000, \$110,000, \$120,000 — we go beyond that. We're talking about —

Mr Steve Gilchrist (Scarborough East): No, \$80,000 means \$80,000.

Mr Marchese: Steve, again in consternation today, says, "What?" We're saying that we would take off those who make \$80,000 taxable income. They don't need the tax break, because they've got the big bucks. Our leader talked about Stronach, the fellow who earns \$25 million a year. That's a whole heap of money. We're not talking \$25,000; we're talking \$25 million.

Mr Gilchrist, my buddy over there, says, "That's OK, because he earns his money, and if he gets an extra \$1 million a year at the end of it, that's OK, that's good." Even though that money goes outside the country for additional investments or inside for his own needs, that's OK, Steve says.

The point of the article is that after you add all of these other factors into the picture, he says there are about 36,000 jobs that could possibly be attributed to this income tax cut. So this boasting from the Conservatives on the other side that their tax cuts have created the thousands and thousands of jobs is questionable, according to economists. I tell you, they're not my friends, most of these economists quoted here; they're friends on the other side. Imagine spending over \$5 billion to create, questionably, 36,000 jobs perhaps, if that.

So, who's getting whacked in this? The little guys, women, children, ordinary people who work for a living and make \$20,000, \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000. These are the people who are not getting the benefits of the tax cut, because this guy here in this picture says it's a cup of coffee a day. That's what it amounts to for this guy here

in this picture, an ordinary working man. Where does he work? A Toronto school teacher. He says it means a cup of coffee a day for him, but not for Stronach, not for the wealthy bankers who earn a million and a half or two and get back \$120,000 a year. We are saying to these people: "Give the money back. It is your obligation to give that money back."

1550

Tories say that's a tax increase; Liberals say — I've heard the rumours from behind — that's a tax increase. But I've got to tell you, they sing the same song. I heard Gerry Phillips today saying the tax cut is evil, and we say it's evil, at least for that upper 6% who get 25% back. We agree with them. It's the same song. But at the end of it, you realize the words are different, the script is different. We're singing the same tune — Jim, sorry.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): But they're cutting taxes in Saskatchewan.

Mr Marchese: Jim is helping me out. Jim, I thank you for the assistance.

Our leader commented on this earlier. Why repeat it? It's pointless, really. Hopefully the campaign will establish these differences.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Same old song.

Mr Marchese: The same old song, I just said, the same old song, different meaning and so on. He knows the music. My buddy Bud Wildman knows the music and he knows when people are singing out of tune and that's why we're pointing it out.

It's for the general public; it's not for us. This debate isn't between us, it's between us and directly to the people watching, because it's always live. The Tories on the other side are chatting, they're reading papers, they're in consternation with our remarks and all that, but the public is listening.

At the end of the day, they're saying, "If this tax cut for me, earning \$50,000, and I get a couple of hundred dollars back, means a reduction of services in health" — which they have visibly seen. We're not inventing the cutbacks in the hospital system. People have experiential feelings about it. They've been there, and if they individually have not been there, some family member has been there. In fact people comment that they now have to bring toilet paper, their own toilet paper, they say, or their own little towel. They've got to be there to assist because there are not enough nurses. This is not a fabrication of ours. You can manipulate the information as much as you want, but the facts are that there's been a reduction of services.

Let's talk about the education system. Our leader has talked about the university system. I have a daughter who is in university and I know the cost and I am as middle class as you can get. I can't afford to pay the tuition fees for my daughter. I'm as middle class as you'll find out there. If I can't afford to pay the tuition fee for my daughter and my daughter after that and my son after that, what do people with more modest incomes of \$30,000, \$40,000, \$50,000 do? Tuition fees that have gone up \$1,600 since these Tories have gone into gov-

ernment are unacceptable to us all and people have to begin to establish a connection between tax cuts and our affordability problems in a whole area of services.

It now costs, I think, \$60 for a birth certificate. A birth certificate that used to be, if I remember, 10 or 20 bucks is now 60 bucks. That's a service fee but the Tories are not going to tell you. If you apply for some research, for information from the privacy commission, it costs now, per document, about 70 or 100 bucks, if I recall. It used to be an accessible \$10 per document. Most people now can't do enough research to be able to attack these Tories because they can't afford the fees these people have imposed, making it impossible for people to see what these people are doing.

The prescription fees have gone up for the poor seniors, seniors who have an affordability problem, seniors whose income is dwindling by the year.

We have a serious problem on our hands that needs to be addressed by the public. We opposition parties cannot solve this problem. It's the public that ultimately will solve it, and they will have to discriminate between what is being said by the Tories and what we are saying and what you, the people of Ontario, are experiencing.

Another economist, Michael McCracken of Ottawa-based Informetrica Ltd, calculates that a cut in government spending eliminates twice the number of jobs that an equivalent tax cut creates. "It would be difficult," he says at the end, "to suggest in any substantive analysis that Ontario will have added net jobs by cutting taxes." These are economists; it's not New Democrats alone who have seen the light, just people, economists, who are probably 99% very conservative minded, and the one little percent out there struggling away to make sense of a Tory world.

"Ontario debt is already about \$7 billion higher because of tax cuts," says this person. "That means another \$350 million a year or more in interest will be added to the debt or to tax bills until the government balances its books." These Harrisites never talk about the fact that they've increased the deficit. They say about deficits that this income tax cut has added jobs, and that's all they talk about, no reduction of services, no increase of deficit. They can't tell the public that; they wouldn't get elected if they told them that. They have to tell the public: "You're making money because of us Tories. You work hard for your buck, and we're giving it back."

But this money comes from one pocket; they're taking from another. They're taking from the poor to give to the most wealthy in Ontario. The clamour across Ontario and across Canada for tax cuts gets greater and greater because the corporate elite that owns the media in this country is pushing for articles to be published on a daily basis that say, "We need tax cuts." A couple of years ago the obsession was with deficits; now the corporate elite says, "We need tax cuts." They're not worried about the deficit any more. Of course the trouble with raising wages is that corporations can't afford it because it would reduce profits. Instead, this argument goes, the government should raise wages by cutting taxes, which

will increase profits. This is the new mantra of today. The only way, the corporations have discovered, to raise wages is to cut taxes. That's how they make the extra bucks. They want governments to reduce income taxes so they themselves don't have to increase their wages. That's how they plan to do it.

This strategy is foolish, foolhardy, because when they do that, the money has got to come from somewhere, and it means a reduction in services. I've got to remind you, Speaker, because you're an intelligent man, when the next recession hits, it will be ugly. You've already put in \$5 billion or \$6 billion in income tax cuts; you plan to put in a couple of billion more if you get re-elected, God forbid. When the next recession hits, how will we make up for the losses? There will be drastic, tragic reductions in hospitals, more cuts in education, more cuts in social services, more cuts in the environment, more drastic cuts and whacking of the labour movement, culture will disappear. That's the litany of cuts we will experience should you, God forbid, be re-elected.

With that, I leave time for some of my colleagues, and have happily raised points that our leader touched on and did not touch on, as a way of leaving us room to add to this debate.

1600

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): I'm very pleased to be able to lead this debate for the government today. As you know, this is an issue that's very near and dear to our hearts, giving Ontarians the opportunity to take more of their hard-earned money home every week. But I find it interesting that the NDP, not the Liberals, have brought this motion today. Frankly, I'm looking forward to seeing where the Liberals stand on today's motion. I'm hoping the Liberals will finally, at some point, give us an idea of where they stand on the whole issue, given the fact that they've compiled a list of spending promises that they've made lately.

We all know that the NDP has been very straightforward and very clear on what they would do around the issue of taxation. When they were in office they raised the tax rate in this province by \$4 billion. We saw the result of those policies around their taxation increases, and that was that we had a net loss of 10,000 jobs in this province because of those tax rates being increased by almost \$4 billion. We've seen as well in the last four years, under the Mike Harris government, where we've lowered the tax rates by \$4 billion, we've had a net increase of jobs by 540,000 in this province.

Clearly the debate is over. Even the *Globe and Mail* today said that — the quote of the day was, "Why should Ontarians revert after only four years to the parties that brought the province to such a sorry pass in 1995?" The *Globe* was talking about, of course, the NDP and the Liberal policies.

The NDP has been very clear on what they would like to see. They would like to see higher taxes, and they have

been honest with the people of Ontario. They've outlined a platform to show the people that they have that choice.

It's the Liberal Party that I'm concerned about. I'm trying to find out if the leader of the Liberal Party is against tax cuts or if he'll actually be honest with the public and admit what he has admitted to union leaders behind closed doors to try to curry their support and financial support for his party. When they listed what they call their platform — it's a compilation of promises to special interests — they called it 20/20 Hindsight, or How to Return Ontario Back to the Failed Policies of the Past.

I would challenge the Liberal leader to speak on this today and finally come clean on the issue of raising taxes, or his stand on taxes and the cost of those lists of promises that he has given to every special-interest group they've come across in the last year or so. I don't challenge this in a partisan way. I issue it out of concern for Ontarians, because they deserve to know the truth.

We know the NDP will pay for their promises through higher taxes, but Ontarians need to know what price the Liberal promises will cost Ontarians. This is a very important issue to the public of Ontario. They want to know how much money they will have in their take-home pay. Working people and families right across Ontario need to know this.

The first and foremost priority of our government has been pretty clear: to make sure that working people in this province get ahead. The key to economic success is to make sure that they get to keep some of their money to spend it how they see fit, not governments.

When we made the tax cuts a priority in our 1994-95 platform, we knew this meant we were to implement a 30% personal income tax cut. We also followed up in four successive budgets by the Treasurer, Ernie Eves, to cut taxes 69 times in this province.

The evidence is in: Tax cuts work. This economy is once again booming. Four short years ago, under the failed policies of 20/20 Hindsight the Liberals would like to take us back to, in 1995 we were dragging Canada down with one of the slowest growth rates in all of Canada. We had the highest number of people trapped in the dependency of social assistance. In just four short years, we have turned this province around by setting the fundamental economic policies back in order.

Tax cuts work. Not only has the tax cut created economic well-being for thousands of families across Ontario, but it has also restored Ontario to its proper place of leading Canada again in economic growth and in job creation. It has also helped the government provide essential services. By having more people working, by stimulating the economy through growth, there are more transactions taking place, there are more revenues coming into the province.

That has allowed us to reinvest in the priorities Ontarians have: In quality health care, there have been massive injections of dollars into our health care system; in quality education, focusing on the classroom, new textbooks, new computers, new curriculum, new stand-

ards. Those dollars for priority services that Ontarians hold dear and need can only be achieved with a growing economy.

The people of Ontario have a clear choice before them: They have the 20/20 Hindsight of returning Ontario to the past, the past failed policies of tax and spend to try to look after the government's wants, or they have a clear choice in the Mike Harris vision of growth, growing our economy and growing opportunities for Ontarians, which also grows revenues to the government, which provides for better health care and better education.

I just want to remind the members of the Legislature and the people who may be watching this on television how tax cuts have helped average people in this province and all people in this province. Let me remind the members how the personal income tax cut actually helps Ontarians.

Every taxpayer gets a tax cut, but the percentage of the tax cut is greater for those with low or moderate incomes. Ontarians with modest incomes get the largest percentage of reductions. Some 64% of the tax reductions, or \$2.9 billion, goes to nearly three million middle-income taxpayers who earn between \$25,000 and \$75,000 in income. People below \$25,000 receive a higher percentage: 50% of their taxes. What the NDP will never tell you is that we liberated 140,000 individuals, low-income earners, from paying any provincial income tax at all. People who were forced to pay taxes under the NDP and the Liberal regimes have been liberated from having to do that because it is not right that you take their hard-earned dollars when they're struggling just to make ends meet.

The Liberal record on this has been rather ambivalent. When the NDP were in power, they voted against that \$4 billion in tax rate hikes, and when we were in power they voted against cutting the rate by \$4 billion. I'm trying to figure out where the Liberals are on this. They voted against the NDP policies and they voted against ours. I guess it's whoever they are in front of, whichever poll they've read that week; that becomes their official position. I think the people of Ontario are entitled to see if Dalton McGuinty will come clean with them on the cost of his litany of promises. He's been rather ambivalent, but he has made some startling revelations as of late around property tax increases.

But first I would just like to reiterate to the House that the Blueprint to keep Ontario on the right track, to build on the success of the last four years — the Mike Harris Blueprint to keep Ontario prosperous — calls for further tax reductions. We've seen that we're on track to create 725,000 net new jobs in this province. We're once again leading Canada in economic growth. The economy in Ontario is up in all sectors, and there is a sense of renewed optimism and pride.

It hasn't been easy to create that environment in this province. There have been some tough decisions. There has been some restructuring that I know other leaders didn't have the courage to put forth. But under the strong

leadership of Mike Harris we have seen a fundamental change in this province, and we want to build on that success story. We have offered this Blueprint to keep Ontario on the right track. It calls for further tax reductions, a further 20% reduction in the personal income tax that Ontarians pay. It's their money, and when they get to keep it and decide how to spend it, that generates economic activity and economic growth and encourages jobs for Ontarians.

Not only are we going to lower the income tax by 20%, but we're going to reduce the provincial portion of the residential property taxes by a further 20% as well. You can't just lower income taxes and allow property tax to go up. We believe there is one taxpayer, and we want to see both property taxes and income taxes come down by 20% for the portion that is the Ontario government's.

We also want to reinvest 20% more dollars to health care over the next mandate.

With this balanced approach, that will create an additional 825,000 net new jobs on top of the 725,000 when that's complete. That's great news for the people of Ontario and the future of this province.

Politics is about choices of direction. Our direction is quite clear. The NDP direction is quite clear.

The Liberal direction is a compilation of special interest policies and deals cut with union leaders. It's very interesting when you compare what we're proposing, a 20% reduction to the provincial portion of the property taxes for the province of Ontario, with what Dalton McGuinty would do to property taxes if he were elected Premier of this province. He has promised that he would open up the property tax base again to school boards in spending.

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Welcome back to the past. When asked directly, he said he would open it up in the magnitude of 5% to 10% a year. That was the failed policy of the past. That didn't ensure quality. That just meant the taxes went up every year to keep pace. It allowed the provincial government to stand back and say, "Oh no, that's a local property tax issue." I can tell you, the seniors in my area were faced with an average of 10% increases each of the last 10 years under the Liberal and NDP and they can't handle it. They're on fixed incomes. They have no way to grow their income in relation to this added burden that Dalton McGuinty's Liberals are now promising to re-inflict upon them.

Don't just take another politician's word for it. I can quote from the Toronto Star on April 28, 1999. Even the Toronto Star, usually a bastion of Liberal thinking and Liberal propaganda, mentions:

"But McGuinty would give the boards back some taxing power — up to 10% of the total education budget. That could mean up to \$1.3 billion a year in additional property taxes, a hefty new burden for ratepayers."

To offset the impact, McGuinty has also promised about \$200 million in offsets.

So a \$1.3-billion increase across the province on the property tax base, and he hasn't costed it out. I would

like to see if they're going to come clean on this. I read their 20/20 Hindsight to return us to the policies of the past that have failed, but I didn't see it costed out. They couch it in terms of nice fuzzy concepts such as, "We'll give local boards the flexibility to meet local priorities." Translation: 10% a year in most areas of the province on your property tax bill.

Up to \$1.3 billion, according to the Toronto Star. You contrast that to Mike Harris's vision of Ontario of a \$500-million reduction over the term of our mandate on personal property taxes. That benefits every homeowner and every tenant, because under our proposal in the blueprint to keep Ontario on the right track, property tax savings must be passed on to the tenants in the form of lower rent. That's a positive vision, a good news vision for Ontario, one that creates hope and opportunity and allows tenants and senior citizens to get by on their fixed incomes without the uncertainty of higher taxes every year eating away at their take-home and disposable income. I think it's very cruel of the Liberals to propose to allow taxes on properties to go up 10% a year because they've made some deal to try to get union support from Earl Manners and others.

Don't take my word for it. Read the Toronto Star, April 28. Ian Urquhart spells it out. That's \$1.3 billion year after year.

If you take a look at the compounding effect of that, in year one of a Dalton McGuinty mandate, that would be approximately \$1.3 billion that Mr Urquhart mentions. If you take year two and you add that on top, there's a compounding that takes place. It would come up to about \$1.45 billion on additional property taxes. Year three of a Liberal platform would be an additional \$1.6 billion. Then you've got year four. When you compound and you add the \$1.6 billion to that base, it would be 10% of a base that would be approximately \$18 billion. It would be \$1.8 billion in additional property taxes. In the fifth year of a Liberal-led province you would see it be \$2 billion. If you total that up, cumulatively, for the five years, you're looking at about \$8 billion more in property taxes.

I can understand why they didn't want to spell that out in their 20/20 Hindsight return to the past. But if you contrast that to the Mike Harris Blueprint to keep Ontario on the right track, which calls for a \$500-million reduction, I think the choice will be quite clear to the people of Ontario. Dalton McGuinty wants to increase property taxes, according to the Toronto Star, by \$1.3 billion. Mike Harris wants to lower them.

The reason we want to lower taxes is that Ontarians are overtaxed. I think today you can see it quite clearly. This weekend John Manley, who might be known to some in this House and probably quite familiar to the viewers on television — he's the federal Liberal who actually shares the same riding as Dalton McGuinty: same riding, same party, same issue, both talking about taxes. But on tax cuts, that's where the similarity ends.

Here's what the federal industry minister had to say in Saturday's National Post about the need for tax cuts to boost competitiveness and keep skilled workers in

Canada. According to Mr Manley: "I've been saying for a long time we've got to lower taxes. We've got a lot of pluses, we've also got some minuses. One of those is that personal income taxes are higher than elsewhere. That, we have to try to fix."

We couldn't have said it better ourselves. In fact, that's exactly why Mike Harris has cut personal income tax rates by 30% so far and will cut them another 20% in his Blueprint for an even stronger Ontario. So could these two Liberals please get their act together?

Here's Dalton McGuinty just the day before in the Toronto Sun: "This province can't handle more tax cuts." Mr McGuinty, the evidence is clear that tax cuts have fuelled the creation of 540,000 net new jobs in this province and helped drive the deficit towards zero so we can invest in things Ontarians want and need. So why aren't you as concerned about jobs, competitiveness and productivity as your party and your colleague Mr John Manley? That's probably why the quote of the day in the Globe and Mail was: "Why should Ontarians revert, after only four years, to parties that brought the province to such a sorry pass in 1995?"

The evidence is quite clear. Tax cuts work. Not only have our tax cuts in the last four years benefited all Ontarians, but they've been particularly helpful to those 140,000 low-income earners who suffered under the NDP regime who no longer have to pay taxes.

I think the choices are quite clear in the different directions the parties want to take. The NDP and ourselves have been quite clear, quite straightforward and honest with the people of Ontario, but the Liberals are trying to not really be clear on what their special interest promise list in 20/20 hindsight to the past would cost Ontarians.

The other thing we want to mention is that the tax cuts have allowed us, by growing the economy of Ontario and getting people back to work and giving them hope and opportunity, to actually collect more revenues for the province in terms of paying for health care and education but also to meet our commitment that we promised in the Common Sense Revolution to balance the budget in five years.

I often hear people talking about: "What is the deficit? What has been added to the debt?" I can tell you that there was a choice. We could have carried on with the policies of the Liberals and the NDP to tax and spend and allowed the deficit to continue at \$11 billion a year and the compounding of interest, or we could have, as we promised, grow our way towards a balanced budget and then grow our way to pay down the debt, and that's what we chose. We don't feel it's proper to just race to the bottom line. You've got to have some growth, and our party has a growth agenda and a growth plan. That's why we cut taxes to get people working. When they're working, they're buying goods, they're paying taxes, and as a result, governments get more dollars to work towards balancing their budgets and paying down their debt.

With our Blueprint to keep Ontario on the right track, not only are we going to cut taxes, grow the economy

more and build on the success stories that Ontario has seen for the four years, but we're actually going to spend more on health care and education, lower personal income taxes and property taxes and also have some paydown on the debt. Just to make sure that happens, today I introduced on behalf of Premier Mike Harris balanced budget legislation which will lock in that balanced budgets will have to be the norm after the year 2000-01, and if they're not, there will be accountability measures where the Premier, the cabinet and the executive council will lose their executive pay.

That's one of the things we want to make sure of, that there's accountability. I know the NDP is accountable in laying out their platform, but the Liberals aren't being accountable. I don't know if they have something to hide. I look forward to seeing if they'll come clean with their collection of special promises to the union leaders to curry favour and financial support in the anticipated upcoming election. That'll be interesting to watch.

I know that McGuinty has been quite clear on the record. In the North Bay Nugget on July 29, 1997, "I wouldn't give you a tax cut." In the Toronto Star, March 10, 1997, "I think governments should always reserve the right to raise taxes" — to raise taxes. Not only is John Manley saying that our taxes are too high; McGuinty's musing that governments should have the right to raise taxes.

In the Ottawa leadership debate, September 11, 1996: "No, we simply cannot go into the next election with one plank of our platform being that we promise to raise taxes. That's a non-starter." He doesn't want to promise it, but he's quietly saying that they've got to reserve the right, and then maybe with the union leaders he's saying: "We'll open up this vault of money over here on the property tax side and we won't be accountable for that." I'm telling you, there's only one taxpayer, and for the senior citizens on fixed incomes in this province I think that's horrendous and I think that's cruel.

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In conclusion, I welcome the NDP opposition day motion; I think it's very timely and very appropriate. They've been very forthright that they believe in higher taxes and they've been consistent on this. When they were in government they raised the tax rate \$4 billion and it cost Ontario a net loss of 10,000 jobs in their term of office.

Our party has been quite consistent: We believe in lower taxes to create growth, to create opportunity and hope, and to restore Ontario and keep it on the right track to lead Canada into the next millennium. It's the Liberals who have promised all the spending that they can find and try to mirror the NDP in their promises to the special interest groups to curry the support of the union leaders, but they're not coming clean with the people of Ontario on the costing of those promises.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today.

Ms Shelley Martel (Sudbury East): It's a pleasure to participate in the debate. I want to frame my remarks in this way: The Globe and Mail recently released an article that showed the top income earners in 1998. The top five

wealthiest people in the province of Ontario brought home \$134 million in income in 1998. But if you apply the 30% Harris tax scheme to those people, in addition to the \$134 million the five of them brought home, they would also have received another \$4.8 million in benefits from the Harris tax scheme. You know something? This is a group that doesn't need a 30% tax scheme. It is obscene that we have a scheme in the province that allows the top five wealthiest people in the province to bring home that much more.

Modest- and middle-income families in this province know that they have seen not a cent of financial benefit from the Harris tax scheme. You ask modest- and middle-income families to add it up, to do the math, and they will tell you the following: that they are paying 60% more now for college and university tuition for their kids; that they are paying a copayment now for their senior parents to get medication they need; that they are now paying more property taxes.

Certainly we saw that everywhere in the regional municipality of Sudbury. They also now are paying in northern Ontario a vehicle registration fee that this government reimposed after we took it off in 1991 to recognize the higher price of gas.

You ask middle- and modest-income families to add it up and they will tell you that they have seen no financial benefit whatsoever from the Harris tax scheme. In fact, modest- and middle-income families are paying more than ever before right now because of all the new property taxes, new fees, tuition fees that they have to pay because of all the cuts that Harris has made to those important things.

Talk to middle- and modest-income families about what's happening to health care, education and community services, and they will tell you that those important public services are falling apart around their ears in their community. The things that people really care about — publicly funded, publicly administered health care; publicly funded, publicly administered education systems; community services that make our communities strong — those things are falling apart around people because of the cuts that Harris has made to finance this phoney tax scheme.

People will tell you about the long wait they have in emergency rooms, about the fact that they still can't find a family doctor. In my riding alone, five communities are still underserved for family doctors. They will tell you they cannot get home care for their aging parents when they are discharged too early from hospital after an operation. They will tell you, like Lynn Brewster did in the media this week in Sudbury of how she had to be sent to North Bay to deliver a preemie because there was no room, there was no bed in the intensive care unit for preemies at the Sudbury Regional Hospital at the end of March.

They will tell you that their children who need special education resources can't get them; that there's no music, no art, no library programs for their kids; that custodial staff, teachers' aides, speech and language therapists have all been laid off because of the \$1-billion cut to

education. Modest- and middle-income families know the things they really care about are being destroyed to finance this tax scheme.

It's a fallacy for the Chair of Management Board to argue that the tax scheme is creating jobs. Sudbury had the highest unemployment rate in Canada again in April of this year. It has been first or second in the unemployment rate ever since Mike Harris's tax scheme was fully implemented. Where are the jobs in Sudbury, Ontario? The tax cut does not create jobs. If it did, my community wouldn't be leading the unemployment rate in Canada month after month after month.

Our position is clear: The NDP will roll back the income tax scheme for the wealthiest 6%, who get 25% of the benefits. We will roll back the income tax scheme for individuals who have taxable incomes over \$80,000 and we will take the \$1.5 billion that we will save and put it back into health, back into education and back into community services where it will do the most good for the most people.

That is our commitment as we go into this election. The choice for voters is very clear. There is something wrong when the wealthiest five Ontarians, who take home \$134 million, get another \$4.8 million from the Harris tax scheme. There's something wrong when modest- and middle-income families see no financial benefit whatsoever. There's something wrong when we continue to bleed health care, education and community services merely to finance the Harris tax scheme.

If you think it's OK to give that kind of benefit to the top 6%, if you think it's OK that modest- and middle-income families see no benefit, if you think it's OK to bleed health care and important services, you can vote Conservative or you can vote Liberal, because the position of both parties is the same. The Liberal Party says, "There's something wrong about the tax cut," but when Dalton McGuinty was pressed about whether or not he would roll back the tax scheme, he said it would be a mistake to roll back the tax scheme. The Liberals are not prepared to do anything about it.

In the by-election in Nickel Belt last fall, the Liberal candidate was asked if he would urge his party to roll back the tax scheme to put money back into health, education and community services. He said, "You can't unscramble an egg." We heard the Liberal finance critic in this House today saying that it was wrong. It's going to be wrong if you go forward with the new Harris agenda to finance even more money, to borrow even more money for this Harris tax scheme, but the Liberal Party is not prepared to do anything about it. They are going down the exact same road as the Harris Conservatives. There is no doubt about it. Make no mistake about it.

We say very clearly to people, the choice is clear. If you're concerned about health and education and community services and you want to be guaranteed that money is going to go back into those important services, if as modest- and middle-income families you want to see some benefit for a change, and if you are concerned that the top 6% are getting 25% of the benefits, then you vote

NDP in this election. But if you think it's OK to bleed all of those important public services, if you think it's OK that the top 6% of the wealthiest people in this province get 25% of the benefits, and if you think it's OK that modest- and middle-income families see no benefit whatsoever from the Harris tax scheme, you vote Liberal or you vote Conservative, because they've both got the same position when it comes to this important matter.

I think the choice is going to be very clear for people. I am pleased with our position. We say very clearly to people where the money is coming from: \$1.5 billion to be reinvested in those important services, and that is what we will do.

I am pleased to participate in the debate today.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Further debate?

Mr Gilchrist: It's indeed my pleasure to add some comments to the NDP opposition day motion. It's distressing indeed that the Liberal Party doesn't feel inclined to comment. I guess that's because they just can't figure out what their position is when it comes to tax cuts.

Interjection: They have nothing to say.

Mr Gilchrist: They have lots to say. The problem is, depending on what time of day it is, it could be in diametrically opposite directions.

We heard from the NDP their vision of a future Ontario. It's to go back to exactly the sort of fiscal plan that saw this province go to rack and ruin between 1990 and 1995.

One thing I would say about the NDP's platform is that they suggest that their own plan to reinstate the taxes for those earning \$80,000 or more would generate \$1.5 billion in revenue. That's an interesting number, considering that for the last four years both the Liberals and the NDP have, without any debate, accepted the premise that the tax cuts put over \$5 billion back into the hands of Ontarians. Even if I accept their \$1.5 billion, they themselves are admitting that \$3.5 billion to \$4 billion worth of benefits have accrued to middle- and lower-income taxpayers in this province — \$3.5 billion that those people didn't have before.

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This is all about the mindset from both the Liberals and the NDP, that somehow it's government's right to take this money, that it belongs to Queen's Park, and it belongs to Ottawa, it belongs to Toronto city hall. Well, it doesn't. This is money that belongs to the taxpayers themselves. We're not giving them back anything they didn't already have.

Our goal is a very different goal. As I said earlier, the frustration is not knowing where the Liberals stand on this issue. We have said unequivocally that tax cuts create jobs. We have proved that in the last four years.

The economic theory known as the Laffer curve, named after the economist who first postulated the theory, proven in every jurisdiction in North America and around the world that has ever cut marginal tax rates: In fact putting money back into the hands of the citizens will generate more income for businesses and stimulate

more employment. Those people, the new employees, will in turn start paying taxes and the net of all of that is actually more money coming into provincial tax revenues.

We have created as a result of those stimuli 540,000 net new jobs. By cutting taxes 69 times, we have created an atmosphere in Ontario that is quite frankly unparalleled anywhere else in North America. Our economy has led, in terms of growth, not only every province but it has led every American state.

It's interesting when the Liberals in particular talk about the fact that somehow none of the credit for what has happened in our economy since 1995 should accrue to the government, or for that matter to the business people and to the citizenry of the province as well; that somehow it can all be laid at the feet of Bill Clinton and the recovery in the United States, the ongoing growth down south of the border.

If that's true, then how do they explain that we have exceeded the growth rate in every American state? We have exceeded the number of jobs created in every American state. Let me stress that. With three times our population, the state of California has created fewer jobs since 1995 than Ontario. We've created more jobs than New York, or than Florida, or than Texas, or than Illinois.

Those are the facts, but you don't hear the facts from the Liberals; instead you hear rhetoric and you hear spin and you hear them pander to those who would somehow believe that before 1995 it was nirvana in this province. Madam Speaker, I'm sure even you would not agree that we didn't have a wide range of fiscal problems in this province before that election, just four short years ago.

We know that the strong economy not only creates jobs, but that the people who fill those jobs in many cases come from a circumstance far less pleasant than we would want any citizen in Ontario to have to live under: 370,000 of those people were on welfare on the day we were elected. Think about that number: 370,000 people who have broken the cycle of dependency, who clearly have far greater self-respect and whose families have far greater sense of worth knowing that they are providing for themselves, for their own needs.

Only a strong economy can guarantee that we will continue to break that cycle of dependency. Only a strong economy guarantees that we will have the revenue to pay for the important services, not just welfare for those who can't find work and who can't work at all — the disabled who are covered by our various support programs — but other important services such as health care and education.

The tax cuts that put 30% on average back into the pockets of every citizen at the same time, because so many more people are working in Ontario, have actually increased revenue by \$5 billion.

When the Liberals in particular, as they did earlier today, somehow suggest that the increase in the provincial debt can be laid at the feet of the tax cut, that is sophistry at its worst. The fact of the matter is the total provincial debt has gone up less than the interest on the

debt we inherited — less than the interest alone. If it hadn't been for the creation of those 540,000 new jobs, we wouldn't have the revenue to have allowed us to increase health care spending by \$1.5 billion and, quite frankly, to increase education spending by over \$1 billion.

There's no doubt that the strong leadership our Premier has shown in the area of tax cuts is a very clear distinction to the waffling and the weaselling and the vacillation from Mr McGuinty. We've heard in their platform — again I have to give credit to the NDP. While I disagree with their policies, they've at least been honest. They have come out and said they are reversing the income tax cuts over \$80,000. I'm sure all those GM workers out in Oshawa who are in that tax bracket will appreciate being considered the rich, and I'm sure all those Chrysler workers down in Windsor will appreciate having their taxes go up 30%, and of course the Ford workers in Oakville — I imagine they're just salivating at the prospect to pay you even more money. But of course they also remember things like the social contract out in the unions, and I think your message may not fall on as fertile ground out there as you want.

The bottom line is that this province is on the right track. We've created 540,000 net new jobs. In our Blueprint, which sets a very clear distinction to not only the NDP but to the invisible platform of the Liberals, we are forecasting that this new agenda for growth will create 825,000 net new jobs over the next five years.

Clearly we are going to continue to need strong leadership in this province if we are going to attain such lofty goals, but they are attainable. The Conference Board of Canada and other economic think tanks have come out and confirmed that we are in fact ahead of our plan to create 725,000 jobs in the first five years after the election in 1995. So there is absolutely no reason to believe that the very reasonable forecasts we came up with and continue to come up with will not hold true in the years to come.

To restate things that some of the people watching may not have heard from the Premier's launch of our Blueprint last Thursday, we have committed to an additional 20% reduction on personal income tax. Imagine that. We were at 58% of the federal tax rate on the day we were elected. We've already reduced that to 40.5% and after the next election this platform would take us down to 32.5% — a 44% reduction.

Madam Speaker, in your life, in my life, we had never seen a \$1 reduction in personal income tax before the election of the current government. We've seen that under our government — a 30% cut so far and 20% more to come. But it gets better than that. We also know that the burden on property taxpayers is too great, and while many municipalities have done the right thing, unfortunately many others have not.

We know that on the opposite side one of the Liberal members was formerly the mayor of Kingston and The Islands. He's been very critical of property taxes and what's happened to this province in the last few years in the hands of the municipal leaders. The good news is that

our plan cuts another half a billion dollars off residential and multi-residential tax rates, and that's on top of the previously announced half-billion-dollar reduction in commercial property tax rates.

Over and above that we know that for the first time in 15 years many municipal governments did not increase taxes: no increase in taxes here in Toronto, and a stark contrast that is to the decade we were not in government. Under the Liberals and the NDP the average homeowner, the average apartment dweller in the city of Toronto saw their property tax rates go up 7.9% a year, just shy of 80% in 10 years. Instead, under our government, the city has been able to freeze its tax rate. Even better news: Some municipal governments have actually decreased by a 3% reduction, in places like Hamilton, Burlington and Nepean, and the best news comes from places like Chatham-Kent, where some parts of that new, merged municipality saw double-digit decreases in their property tax rates after only one year of amalgamation.

There is no doubt in our mind that tax cuts create jobs. There is no doubt in our mind that the NDP have taken a tack that we believe would in fact reverse a lot of the gains our economy has made. It would take money out of the pockets of consumers; it would take money out of circulation in the economy, and any economist would tell you there's a four- to five-time multiplier effect and every dollar they take back for spending by Queen's Park means \$4 to \$5 less positive impact out in our society.

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Dalton McGuinty has said in his plan, "No new taxes," but then he gets into promises such as the ability for school boards to go back to being able to add taxes. Over and above what the municipality charges you, school boards would have the right to add another 10% to your property taxes. That's a \$1.3-billion tax increase — there's no other way to slice it — and that's what the Liberals have promised to do.

Interjection: It's 20/20 Hindsight.

Mr Gilchrist: They call their 20/20 Plan. Interestingly, they stole that from the Reform Party. But the bottom line is, the creativity they showed in picking their title is just about matched by their creativity when it comes to fiscal planning.

They've gone further, and this should inflame every person in the province of Ontario who is looking for credible visions of the province's future. The Liberals have suggested that for \$50 million they're going to hire more staff for the Ministry of the Environment and convert all the Hydro plants from coal to natural gas. Actually, to be fair, they say \$50 million plus incidental costs. Even a very ardent environmental group has come out with a forecast that those incidental costs would work out to \$1.8 billion. But it gets better. The people who actually do this for a living at Ontario Hydro, who have already converted one plant from coal to natural gas, who are in the throes of planning another conversion, have said the cost of converting all of Ontario's coal generation to natural gas would be \$6.8 billion. You would have to increase taxes in Ontario by over 12% right there, just to balance the books.

Alternatively — and Mr McGuinty didn't shy away from this; he said, "I'm still sticking to that no-tax-increase promise, but I do recognize your Hydro rates would go up." Unless the Liberals believe people have the option of going to candles, the reality is a Hydro increase is just as much an impact on the low-income — in fact, a disproportionately greater impact — Ontarians than a tax increase.

Interjection: You've got to have heat.

Mr Gilchrist: You've got to have heat; you've got to have light, although sometimes we wonder about the light on the other side.

The bottom line: Mr McGuinty has said he guarantees that there will be no tax cuts if he is elected. He has guaranteed there will be no tax cuts if he is elected, so at least we have that on the record — although I know the election hasn't been called yet, and being Liberals that could be subject to change at any moment. Please do not rely on a copy of the 20/20 Plan as being the final vision. They may go back to the optometrist and get a boost in their vision. It isn't a platform. Dalton McGuinty's 20/20 release is not a platform, it's a shopping list. It is a shopping list designed to befuddle, to confuse, to obfuscate, to mislead the people of this province.

What is needed right now is a very clear message. We've heard it from the NDP. We disagree, but at least we've heard their clear message. You've seen 52 pages, the most detailed platform ever released by a political party, in particular by a government, in the history of this province. But from those who would prefer to be on this side of the House, who currently sit in the official opposition, we've seen nothing that specific, nothing that sincere, nothing with the sort of integrity that the voters of Ontario deserve — nothing less.

I know there's only one Liberal in the House here today because they don't care. They don't care about the debate, they don't care about tax cuts, which is why they're presumably not speaking on the subject of tax cuts. But the people who are watching deserve to know, not the day before the election but in plenty of time to go to those all-candidates' meetings and grill the Liberal candidates and find out precisely where the Liberal Party stands on this issue.

Madam Speaker, I would like to leave the rest of my time for our third speaker. I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to this motion.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr John O'Toole (Durham East): It's so seldom I get to speak in the House that this is indeed an honour. I'm somewhat apprehensive, but it's such an important subject.

In response to the opposition day — they've taken on the issue of coming forward with a clear plan to hike taxes. I applaud them for being so open and forthright.

Let's review the three positions in this, perhaps the last business day here in this House — who knows? I like to characterize the NDP plan as the tax-fight plan. I want to characterize the Liberal plan, or lack of one, as an uncosted wish list, "a spurious grasping" says a Toronto Star article, that was captioned with "Plan 20/20." In my

view, the best way the people of Ontario should remember it is that they'll increase taxes 20 times by 20%. If you can think of 20/20 as \$20 billion more on the debt, I think you'll be pretty close to what the real plan is.

Our plan is another important plan to encourage growth in this wonderful and magnificent province. Why would you want to encourage growth? Growth and a strong economy are the fundamentals. It's the framework for strong health care, strong education and strong social programs. Throughout this whole thing, it's important for us — why do we need such a strong economy? It's a strong social network that we need for children, children at risk. The early learning and parenting programs, the programs for speech and language, the breakfast programs could not have been possible if it weren't for the strong economy and the partnerships that this government has been able to form.

I've always felt that if you don't stand for something, you'll fall for anything. That's the problem I have with Dalton McGuinty's group. They're going to have a lot of negative spin on a good-news story.

If I look around today, I can see the result of the last four years. I think the evidence is overwhelming. If you look at the motive here, we started at a point in 1995 — Mr Bradley, respectfully, I think you would probably agree — with over an \$11-billion deficit. You've always got to remember that this was in excess of \$1 million an hour that we were spending more than we were taking in as revenue. Clearly, the whole plan has to be the ability to sustain those programs.

We inherited a 10-year legacy of mismanagement and miscalculations, characterized by radical moves such as the social contract. The Liberals, in the couple of years they had in government — the lean years, we'd call them — had the highest revenue and the highest expenditure. Really, their characterization is to spend their way out of every single problem. I suspect in the future, the way I've seen Dalton following around all of the special interest groups and kind of saying yes to this and yes to that, and yes to this and yes to that, if the people of Ontario really want to make a choice that's in opposition to this government, their clear choice by a long shot is Howard Hampton and his band renowned.

I come back to some simple principles. We've always been very clear on measuring and being accountable, the chart — how many jobs; the 69 tax cuts; everything being measured, accountable and transparent to the people of Ontario.

There's an old expression, if I may: "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it." I think what we're doing for the people of Ontario is saying, "We simply cannot continue to raise taxes." That is the key here.

1650

Just recently, in fact in the paper this weekend, there was quite a little discussion between Dalton McGuinty and John Manley. John Manley is a federal member, I agree, but he seems to have gotten the message. They've seen how the prosperity in Ontario has helped the federal government to balance its budget.

I'm going to read for you. This is from John Manley:

"I've been saying for a long time we've got to lower taxes. We've got a lot of pluses, we've also got some minuses. One of those is that personal income taxes are higher than elsewhere. That, we have to try to fix."

Mr Manley fully understands that. That's the clarity of his plan. If I look to find some clarity in the 20/20 Plan — as I said, I'm going to refer to it from this point on as an uncoded wish list or a collection of articles from the Toronto Star which they have an interest in.

If I'm looking around my riding — and it really does come down to that — the important thing is to look and see what I've said. It's strange. I was looking for some office space just recently for another use. There wasn't one vacant store on the main street in Port Perry or Bowmanville or, for that matter, most of the communities in my riding. In 1995 the rents were falling; there were all kinds of storefront properties. That's just one example.

I happened to run into some friends of ours. He had a work-related injury. I happened to run into him in a store. He's on his feet to recovery and returning to work. He said, "They're so busy at work." When he was originally hurt, about three years ago, he was afraid there would be no job when he went back. Now they're so busy they can't wait for him to get back. This is a personal story of a personal friend, and I'm certainly happy to report that he's recovering. I can tell you as well that he had some of the best treatment in health care. In fact, he wrote an article in the local paper about it. There's clearly evidence there that he's happy that things are improving.

Just recently in an article in the Globe and Mail, it says, "Ontario's economy is the fastest-growing in the G7 nations" — there it is; it's being reported here — "showing growth in employment, the strongest in Ontario of all the rest of Canada."

I want to refer to a very important article. I think it's relevant to our young people. I have five children and three of them are in university. My second daughter has just finished her fourth year at Western University in kinesiology. She had been going into occupational therapy, that area, but for the last couple of summers she's been working in children's programming and children in special needs circumstances. She has chosen to go into teaching because she sees it as an important emerging opportunity for young people.

We've got to create the opportunities for young people by helping the economy grow and helping to invest in their futures.

The firm in this article is talking about the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board. One of the people, Bill Buxton, was commenting that for years he's been yelling but no one's been listening. Finally, he got involved. He said: "This has been a remarkable experience. It's better than exposure I've had in the past with other government organizations." There it is right there. This is a leading business person, with Alias/Wavefront, a high-tech firm. This article goes on to compliment the government on a new plan. He says, "The new plan is doubling the pipeline project," officially known as the Access to Opportunities program. "It's a commitment by the pro-

vince to invest \$150 million over the next three years to add 17,000 more spaces at universities and colleges in the areas of computer science, electrical engineering and other technical areas. There you have it from an industrial leader that, first, the government is listening, and the next most important thing is that they're delivering on important programs after listening. That article goes on at some length but I won't go on.

It's multifaceted. This whole issue talks about how innovation and diversification spur northern Ontario's growth. Looking at Bearskin Airlines, it's employing employs 24,000 people by making a \$1-billion investment in an important industry in the north.

Those articles aren't rare by any stretch, but when I was looking through my materials I quickly found that we've got to have a strong economy so we can support important programs like health and education. I suggest that Ontario's on the right track. It has created 540,000 net new jobs.

If you look at the overall plan, in every jurisdiction in North America — every state and every province — the employment rate is up in Ontario and Ontario is the best place in North America in which to live, to work and to invest. Tax cuts certainly do create jobs.

Ontario has not only balanced its budget but is moving towards a plan in the future to deal with the deficit. In 1995 we inherited an \$11-billion deficit — just to reinforce — and in the budget to be announced tomorrow, I am certain we are going to be on track ahead of schedule to have a balanced budget, as promised, in the year 2000-01.

Sixty-nine tax cuts have resulted in 540,000 jobs. I challenge the Liberals, the couple of them who are here today, to stand up and declare their hand. How are you going to pay for these unfunded fancy promises? You're going to raise taxes. Clearly that's the plan. The people have a very difficult decision. If it's the Liberals, you've got no choice. You've got to look at the NDP plan.

But our plan is clear. It is to continue the growth of the economy and prosperity so we can support important social programs, not just in my riding of Durham East and for families in my riding, but indeed for all the people of this great province.

Mr Bradley: I'm glad to have an opportunity to speak this afternoon in the House. I've noticed there is a hard-edged, partisan tone to the House this afternoon which tells me there must be an election coming.

If I didn't know it from the other signs that all of us have seen out there, just from the hard, partisan tone I would say there must be an election coming. I've listened to the strategy. My friends in the NDP are a bit embarrassed by this, but they'll take it. They laugh as you try to compliment them in as many ways as possible, because they know that you really don't agree with them, that you're not really trying to help them out, except out of the House. But we know the strategy. I watched the heir apparent as he rose in the House. This is the member for Victoria-Haliburton, who has been placed ahead of Dave Johnson, the former stand-in Deputy Premier when Ernie Eves wasn't here. Now it's the heir apparent from

Victoria-Haliburton. I saw all the words out there. You have to get up and say you're on the right track. Those are the words you use in all your strategy; you've got to say that.

Then you've got to say, "We don't agree with the NDP, but boy, we respect them." That's what you've got to say next as part of the strategy, because you certainly recognize — at least if we look at some pretty steady polling results over time — that the only party that could replace you as the government would likely be the Liberal Party. So I understand. If it were the opposite, you would be trying to prop the Liberals up. I understand that. That's a strategy which governments use.

I haven't seen as arrogant a display as I have seen in the House today. That's a good sign, actually, for those of us in the opposition, to see the arrogance of the government. That's best epitomized, probably, in my friend from Scarborough East, who has all the answers to every question and is a hard-nosed partisan. He knows I don't criticize him for that, but that is exactly what we see: the know-it-all, everybody-else-must-be-wrong, we-must-be-right attitude of the government.

They talk about special interest groups. I know the special interest groups of this government. The special interest groups were best represented at the huge Conservative fundraiser held at the Metropolitan Toronto Convention Centre last Thursday night. Steve Gilchrist — we're not supposed to use names — will help me out if I do not have the figures correct. There were 3,300 people at the huge fundraiser you had at the convention centre — I think over 3,000 people. The net gain for the Conservative Party was \$2.5 million in one night, if you can believe that.

1700

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): It sounds like sour grapes over there.

Mr Bradley: The member says it sounds like sour grapes. No, I simply say to the people of Ontario, if they want to know who the Conservative Party has catered to, it has been the rich and the privileged. So if you are very rich and very privileged and you don't have a social conscience — you have to fit those three categories — then I would strongly recommend that group should vote for the Conservative Party. I think that's a fair assessment. That is your vested interest group that you speak of when you speak of vested interest groups.

You try to court others in our society by zeroing in on what you think are good targets. I would never compare you to the worst regimes that we've seen in our history, but I want to tell you, the traits are there, that is, targetting groups that can be unpopular, trying to play on people's emotions about a minority of people in a community and to boot them around because they know it gets votes with others. I don't know if that will work this time. I think you're counting on it doing so.

I listened to the Premier in some of his late pronouncements, although he was in an argument with the Solicitor General. The Solicitor General said we're going to have armed police officers in all of the schools, and the Premier got on with Robert Fisher — that's been bad

luck for him, because you'll remember it was Robert Fisher who asked him the question during the last election campaign, when they had the all-party debate in May 1995. They had a question that was placed to the Premier. They said — I'll paraphrase his question — "Does your health care plan mean any hospitals are going to close?"

Here's what Mike Harris said. He looked right into the camera, with that square jaw and handsome face and — I was going to say, "with a blue suit on," but I've got a blue suit on today — and said, "Certainly, Robert, I can guarantee you it's not my plan to close hospitals." Since that time we've had about a fifth of the hospitals in Ontario close or be forced to merge. That's Robert Fisher.

This time Robert Fisher said, "Is it true you're going to put armed police in all the schools?" He said, "No, that's not our plan, and nobody in our government said it was our plan." He was yelling, I heard, at Robert Fisher down the hallway about it after. He got back to the office and, sure enough, my friend Mad Dog, as we call him affectionately in this House, not in any derogatory way, Bob Runciman, a good friend of mine over the years, said, "I did say that." So we've got this conflict, with the Premier saying, "No, we're not having armed guards in all the schools," and the Solicitor General says we are. I don't know who to believe in that. I guess the Premier must win out. But it's going back to the fact that you're picking on all the people you think you can get votes by picking on.

Let me read from a letter which I think is still relevant today. The letter was written in November 1995, I believe; at least I read it into the record on November 20, 1995. It was an open letter from Walter Asbil. He is the Anglican bishop of Niagara. He wrote a pretty strong letter to the Premier of this province, about a style of this government that remains today. Let me quote the letter, because I think it best describes the government we've had in office for the past four years.

I know, and my friend from Scarborough East will like this allusion, that the Premier wanted to save like Scrooge and spend like Santa. I'm trying to get that Canadian Tire reference. He wanted to save like Scrooge, and now he spends like Santa. The right-wing commentators out there who said, "One thing you can say about Mike Harris is that he's different from the other politicians" — well, all I've seen is Tory MPPs running around with cheques to give out from this huge slush fund. My friend from central Ontario, the Muskoka area, the Reform Party organizer up there, must be beside himself now to see Tory MPPs running around doling out the cheques, because he ran on a platform of, "We're cutters."

But, you see, what has happened is that the Premier recognized that he can't get re-elected on those policies, so he's now got to — if it's moving, give it a cheque. He's totally shed the snake's skin. I don't mean "snake" in a negative way; I don't make those references. But you know how a snake sheds its skin or the leopard tries to change its spots, and he's now Santa Claus out there. The

right-wing commentators must be wondering what they're going to say about him, because they've always said, "He's different," or "He keeps his promises," like the promise I made reference to of not closing any hospitals, and then he went around the province closing hospitals.

Let me read from Bishop Asbil of the Anglican Church, the Anglican Diocese of Niagara. Walter Asbil said the following:

"Dear Premier Harris,

"I write to you out of deep conviction and concern. During the past few months, this level of concern has increased to the point that silence is no longer possible.

"You and your government have received a strong mandate from the people of Ontario and that mandate is to govern. The responsibility that comes with this charge is awesome and I want to begin by assuring you that the members of our parishes in Niagara diocese pray for you and your government on a regular basis.

"The task of government, however, is to govern fairly" — notice that Bishop Walter Asbil makes reference to fairness — "with a passion for justice towards all segments of society. In trying to face the problems before it, and we all realize that you face huge difficulties, the solutions chosen must not treat one group in society more harshly than another.

"In dealing with a problem as important and difficult as the provincial debt, every Ontario citizen should share in its solution, with those who have more resources being asked to take proportionate responsibility.

"What I perceive, however, in the first months of your mandate as our Premier, is that your government is singling out the poorest segment in our society, the ones with no champion in your cabinet, and you are asking them to bear the brunt of your efforts to reduce the debt. At the same time, you're giving me and others like me in the so-called "middle class" a healthy boost in my health coverage so that I can more easily head to Florida for as much of the winter as I wish. Further, you are promising me a substantial reduction in the taxes I pay (30% seems to be the target). I could easily go into many other details regarding your announced policies, but allow me for the sake of brevity to paint only this broad picture."

"This is where I think it becomes rather condemning and this is what I think members of the government should take into account and think about. I don't expect you're going to respond in the House to it, but think about it. He makes the following observation" — Bishop Asbil, the Anglican Bishop of Niagara:

"The face your government is presenting to Ontario increasingly is one that shows heartlessness, no compassion, callous disregard and an attitude towards the poor that is perceived as mean and patronizing. Your ministers stereotype groups of people with labels, forgetting they are citizens, voters, sisters and brothers and neighbours. Some in your cabinet, and I allow generously for inexperience, shock me with their remarks and attitudes, as if speaking about things and not about people, who ask only for the respect every human deserves.

"The patronizing attitude towards the disabled, the single parent, the poor, the abused, the homeless, all of them our sisters and brothers, is especially upsetting.

1710

"My strong hope and prayer is that you and your government will turn another face toward the people you govern. Why cannot the government of the largest province in Canada become known as a compassionate government? This does not mean abandoning plans to face the very real problems you confront, but it does mean that such plans are shaped with a care for people, for all people. Why cannot the government of Ontario bring a balance into its program and stop singling out, victimizing, ridiculing those least able to speak out or stand up for themselves? Why do you promise the already rich even more riches and, at the same time, slam the poor?

"As Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Niagara, I have responsibility for 116 congregations in southern Ontario, for the membership of 50,000, including communities between Fort Erie and Shelburne, from Guelph to the Mississauga border. This diocese includes cities like Niagara Falls, St Catharines, Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Milton, Georgetown, Orangeville, Guelph and many of the surrounding towns and communities. Our clergy and lay leaders continue each day in trying to respond to the basic needs of people in their particular area. Many are on boards and committees in their region who support and help people in a wide variety of ways. How utterly discouraging it is to all of these leaders when the government of our province scolds us as we try our best and offer no sense of partnership, concern or continuing financial support.

"While I do not try to speak for every member in all our parishes, since most can speak for themselves, I do represent the clergy and people of the diocese of Niagara in asking you to have passion for fairness, for justice and for compassion.

"My basis for this concern goes out of personal faith, from the Scriptures that Christians hold as central, from the way and example of Jesus Christ. These central things of our faith encourage our parish members to join all others in society to work for the well-being of all, having special regard for our sisters and brothers who are poorest among us.

"The prayers of the people of the diocese of Niagara are offered to God regularly for you and for the government you lead."

It's signed by Walter Asbil, Anglican Bishop of Niagara.

I had wished that three and a half years or the fourth year into this government that letter wouldn't apply today. It does, unfortunately. I hear it in the Conservative rhetoric. I understand politics very much — I've been in the political field for a number of years — but I cannot accept stepping on the face of someone else to push yourself up. Those people don't have the same access. They couldn't attend the fundraising dinner in Toronto, where there were tables going I think for some \$12,000 a table in the prime locations, at least \$5,000 a table, and

there were all those people, the economic elite of Ontario. Those people couldn't afford to go to that fundraising dinner. They don't go into the Albany Club. They don't rub shoulders with a lot of people in this government, unfortunately. I guess our responsibility as elected members is to speak for those who are unable to speak for themselves.

I see the amount of money you're squandering on what is clearly self-serving advertising. Peter Desbarats, who is a professor of journalism, now retired I believe, from the University of Western Ontario, has been critical of governments of all stripes and complimentary of governments of all stripes, really said that it was the nature of the advertising that was the problem. Professor Nelson Wiseman from the University of Toronto, when asked, was condemning of this. But you see, you had money for that — \$100 million worth of money — not for providing direct information, because that's quite legitimate, but for self-serving advertising, for something that should be paid for by the Conservative Party and not by the taxpayers of this province.

I don't know whether it works or not. The experts in the advertising field say, "If you hammer away enough and you put the message out there enough, people almost subliminally accept it," except I'm encountering a lot of people, including Conservative friends, who are sickened by it. They turn on the television set, turn on the radio, open the newspaper, open their mailbox and there's Mike Harris, Conservative Premier of Ontario, extolling the virtues of his government and actually even attacking those who disagree with him, using very well worded advertisements. It's a sign of arrogance and it's a sign of style.

You're going to have enough money to run the campaign anyway. You have catered your policies to the rich and the privileged in this province and they have rewarded you with millions of dollars in return in campaign contributions. In fact, in what I would, I think, fairly call an attack on democracy, you have tried to rig the rules in favour of (a) the governing party and (b) a governing party that caters to the rich and powerful and privileged.

You've done that through legislation you passed in this House which allows for far more money to be donated to political parties and far more money to be spent in a provincial election campaign in individual constituencies and across the province. It's not as though the Conservative Party doesn't have all kinds of money to spend on advertising — it does — but it's decided to abuse its public office by spending taxpayers' dollars and having ministries engage in what I think any objective person would call self-serving, blatantly partisan advertising at the taxpayers' expense.

What makes this even more difficult to accept is that Mike Harris ran as the person who was going to eliminate unnecessary expenditures. Yet here is a clear squandering of tax dollars, a clear abuse of public office. Conservative members sit silently and accept that. I don't know, maybe at your caucus meetings you say something about it.

I thought Gary Carr, the member for Oakville, who appeared on Focus Ontario with me to deal with the issue of advertising, was as fair as you're going to get. Gary said — and I'll paraphrase him; he'll get up and correct me tomorrow if he wants to, but I think I'm fair. He plays hockey with a group of people and he asked them in the dressing room, "So what do you think of our advertising?" and they said, "Why don't you spend the money on health care instead of that advertising?"

People are talking about that. I know you think you can get away with it. I know you think you've got so much party money out there that once the campaign starts you can bombard the airwaves with commercial after commercial during the hockey game or, of all things, the Monica Lewinsky interview; you even had commercials, I'm told, on that.

What I am looking at is the nature —

Mr Wettlaufer: Your government spent double what we did.

Mr Bradley: The member who is not sitting in his own seat —

The Acting Speaker: Order, please. Member for Kitchener, come to order.

Mr Bradley: If he's going to defend that — he ran as part of a team that was never going to misuse tax dollars in this province, and his attitude is, "Well, somebody else did it, so it's okay for us to do it." I'm going to tell you that the people who are objective observers who look at this believe that you have made it even more partisan than it's ever been before.

Let me quote Nelson Wiseman, a University of Toronto political scientist. He said: "I've never seen this type of advertising anywhere in Canada.... This is unprecedented."

"The Tories have 'an enormous edge' over the other two main political parties and special interest groups, says York University political scientist Robert MacDermid," another person observing.

"Not only can they use taxpayers' money but they have also raised more than three times the cash of the other parties, he says."

Dr Wiseman goes on to say, "But too many of the ads and brochures have featured Harris and used blatantly political expressions such as 'on the right track' and 'get on with it' in regard to government programs."

Here's probably the most condemning statement of the government advertising program by Professor Wiseman. "It's a flagrant and wasteful expenditure of public monies," he says. "It's all the more insulting to the intelligence of the public because this is a government that said it's going to cut back on wasteful spending."

1720

I looked at a secret document that got out, that was leaked, and it tells about the government advertising and what it's designed to do. I'm quoting from this secret document that was leaked some time ago. It says:

"Our creative" — that means our advertising — "must influence both the hearts and minds of target audiences. To be effective, our advertising must leave the target

audience feeling comfortable with trusting the Mike Harris government with Ontario's education system. The emotional impact of our advertising is perhaps even more important than the content of the copy."

It goes on and mentions many things about your advertising: "Our message needs to be as tangible as possible. We should simplify concepts as much as possible so that the audience can picture and personally relate to them. In a given piece of advertising there should be one single, simple message. Too often we have included more than one message in a single commercial."

It goes on. You can just see how this government is trying to manipulate public opinion and is designed to do so through its advertising. There's lots of money for that, not necessarily lots of money otherwise.

Something else I've noticed that I've not seen before — I don't think I've seen it before — and that is government MPPs using what must be their global budget or something to advertise in the newspaper. It says, "A report to constituents," or something like that. I'll tell you something: I would never, ever think — I'm not trying to put myself as a virtuous person — of using taxpayers' dollars to put out a message in a newspaper that is clearly partisan. I don't know, again, how people who run on fiscal responsibility can, in all good conscience, do that.

I know constituency newsletters go out. I haven't put one out for years and years. I don't criticize anybody else for doing it — don't get me wrong — but to see these ads just days before and a couple of weeks before an election, ads using taxpayers' dollars — if the Conservative Party wants to pay, I don't object to that; that's politics — but that's an abuse of public office, and I think people are going to condemn that rather strongly.

As I look out there today into Ontario, I don't see the Ontario of Leslie Frost, John Robarts or Bill Davis, all of whom were pretty moderate, middle-of-the-road people. I see a hard-edged, very right wing and, I guess from some views, a pretty extremist government out there. It's trying to soften the image now, portray the Premier as the cuddly teddy bear out there and the person who's just one of the guys, so to speak, but you've had a devastating effect on many people in this province.

Not everything you've done has been wrong. Don't get me wrong, I want to say to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. I indicated to him the other day that we'd be happy to pass the Vinters Quality Alliance Act. That's a good piece of legislation. I'll say that publicly during the campaign. I asked for it in the House and I know others did as well. Allowing wineries to sell directly to the bars and restaurants, that's good stuff. I've advocated it and I'm sure my colleagues in Niagara have advocated it as well.

So I don't just condemn a government for everything it does. But it's not only the content, it's the style of this government: bullying, intimidating, very insensitive to people who have a legitimate point of view to express. It doesn't mean you have to accept it, but you have to at least listen to people and not put the boots to them on

every occasion simply because it resonated well with a certain portion of the population.

Women in this province have probably understood better than anybody the changes, and Madam Speaker, you have raised some of the issues in the House, as have others: To watch Bethlehem Place in St Catharines lose its funding; to see women's shelters not get the kind of funding they need to carry out their responsibilities; seeing a number of social programs which help people at the bottom end who really couldn't help themselves being eliminated is very difficult.

I don't think there's anybody in this House who wants to see anybody defrauding the welfare system. I think most of us want to see people go from the social assistance category into being able to work in a meaningful job that may be available out there. Everybody wants that goal, and that's out there. But I've seen a meanness of spirit that I've not seen before. I didn't see it in Bob Welch in this House, in Tom Wells, Bill Davis, Roy McMurtry, Susan Fish; I didn't see it in those people. They were pretty moderate people. Yes, on the cautious side, as Conservatives are wont to be on many occasions, but not that meanness, that hard edge to them, that know-it-all rant of the right wing that we heard earlier this afternoon from at least one of the speakers. I won't say that of my friend Mr O'Toole, who gave a speech, but I wouldn't say it was quite in that category. But I heard another one, perhaps a couple of them.

I know what your role is. It's an election campaign. Your role is to try to discredit the Liberal Party and discredit the Liberal leader because we're much higher in the polls than the NDP now. As I said, if they were higher in the polls, you'd be trying to discredit them. That's the way it goes.

I want to talk about the health care system and what you've done to that. If anybody here in Ontario believes that if you people got re-elected you wouldn't revert back to many of your old tactics and many of your old policies, they are very naive people. You set out to cut, and that was what you wanted to do. What the kind of cutting you did brings about eventually is privatization. The rich in our society can afford private health care, but the poor cannot, and the lower-middle-income and even middle-income people cannot.

One of the things all political parties in this Legislature can be proud of is the health care system we've built in Ontario, a publicly funded, universally accessible health care system. It has got many problems today, and a lot of those problems are because this government decided that, while it was running a deficit, it wanted to give a tax cut and therefore had to make deeper cuts and borrow money.

Other governments, once they have balanced the budget — Saskatchewan, for instance — have given a tax cut. The Roy Romanow NDP government, once it achieved a balanced budget, gave some tax cuts. If you can find certain specific relief — remember, I said to the member for Scarborough Centre he had a bill a few years ago. It was kind of targeted, and he wondered why some

people in opposition would support it. I said because it was specifically targeted and can be effective, not just an across-the-board income tax cut that obviously the wealthiest people benefit from. If it was targeted and if it was after the budget was balanced, it would make some sense.

I see a health care system that has been ravaged by this government. You've taken hundreds of millions of dollars out of the health care system in terms of the hospital funding.

Mr Wettlaufer: How can you sit there and say that?

Mr Bradley: The member says, from his wrong seat, "How can you say that?"

The Acting Speaker: Member for Kitchener, come to order.

Mr Bradley: You have taken hundreds of millions of dollars from our hospitals. Sir, I ask you to go out to talk to your people about the kind of hospital care that is available today compared to 10 years ago.

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Member for St Catharines, hold on. Member for Kitchener, come to order. You're not in your seat. You're out of order anyway. Please come to order. Member for St Catharines.

Mr Bradley: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ask any person who had a hospital experience, say, a dozen years ago, 10 years ago, and today. They will all tell you what the difference is. It's not as pleasant today, I can tell you, because you fired out the door thousands of nurses. Oh yes, you say, "We've spent all this money." You had to spend hundreds of millions of dollars in severance payments to nurses you fired out the door of the hospitals. I challenge any member of this government to honestly say that when a person goes in the hospital today that person is likely to get as high a quality of service as 10 years ago.

The nurses will tell you that's not the case, the doctors will tell you that's not the case, other workers in the hospital will tell you that's not the case, and the family and friends. You better have somebody to stay with you, you better have somebody to advocate for you, because it is a mess in the hospitals.

1730

You people go about discrediting public institutions as much as you can so that people will accept a radical solution. In St Catharines you heard me plead, if not once, 300 times in this House for Hotel Dieu Hospital and the other hospitals in our area. So we have the doors still open. In public forums we went to, everywhere else we went to — just before an election is about to be called, they kept the doors open. But I'll tell you, Hotel Dieu Hospital is not the hospital it was before you people announced that. You see, there's no active treatment left in that hospital. You're taking out all of the active treatment beds. There will no longer be 24-hour emergency care, despite the crisis we've had in St Catharines and the Niagara region in emergency care. You've ended that. You've got some urgent care in there for part of the day.

We had a number of other hospitals running deficits. This year that will be looked after. The huge pot, the re-election pot, the one-time pile of money that you have to solve all problems politically by throwing money at them at the last minute, will look after that. But we've had a crisis in emergency care, a crisis in terms of the quality of care that our hospitals are able to offer. We've had home care which has been chaotic. We have had ambulance services where the ambulance drivers here are going to be downloaded and probably privatized. We in the Liberal Party believe the province should bring back the ambulance service to the provincial level, which of course would free up considerable money from the local municipalities.

There are other areas that municipalities should not have to accept, because you've downloaded on them. These are good people who have worked very hard over the years, and yes, they all understand they are going to get a cheque from you so they could either bring down their taxes this one year or perhaps not have the increase that was going to be there. They understand the game, but they know that the long-term responsibilities that you have downloaded on those municipalities will be costly.

Governor Christine Todd Whitman in New Jersey rubbed her hands and said, "You've got a 30% income tax cut in the state level." Mike Harris said the same thing. But you know what happened in New Jersey? Huge increases in the property taxes as new responsibilities were placed on those people.

What we have here is a vision that is much like that of the Republican Party in the United States: not the moderate Republicans, but the right-wing Republicans in the US. The United States is a great country in which to live if you have lots of money, but if you don't, it isn't. If you're poor, if you're disadvantaged, if you're unable to be part of that elite that can be very wealthy, then the United States is not the place for you. I see that coming to Ontario, and I don't think I overstate that. You people, or at least your advisers — the 29- and 30- and 31-year-old whiz kids, the right-wing ideologues — worship at the idol of the Republican policies in the United States.

I don't think Canadians want that. I think we're a more compassionate people. We're frugal, yes. We want to be fiscally responsible, yes. I think people want that. But they want a sense of compassion out there for people who are genuinely in need, and I don't see that compassion here. Those people are relegated to the category of "special interest groups" in this province.

I recognize what the government is up to. I know you think that somehow all this goodness will trickle down to the people who are at the lower echelons of our society. I don't think that's going to be the case. I don't think it has been the case to this point in time. I think people are seeing public services that they were used to in the past, that we expected to have in the past, being lost.

You people like to say, "We've cut all these taxes." I would estimate now that you've probably raised taxes 400 or 500 times, because you've raised user fees. When you raise user fees, the rich and the privileged are able to

accept those user fees. They can get by with them. They benefit because then they don't have to share with others in bringing those services to others in their community.

Not everybody can drive a Cadillac. Not everybody can live in a mansion. Not everybody can go to Paris for a holiday twice a year. I don't expect that. But I think there are certain basic services that all Canadians and all Ontarians should have available to them. We shouldn't have gated communities where you have a special police force that doesn't allow undesirables into a rich subdivision. We shouldn't have to have that in Ontario, yet I could see us moving to that, if we keep going in that direction.

I see the fees that are now placed on senior citizens' prescriptions. That's to punish them because somehow this government thinks senior citizens are abusing the system because they need those medicines. There are a lot of senior citizens who are able to live to a much older age today because of a lot of those prescription drugs that are available, and appliances and services that might be available. When I see you start to delist those, take those drugs off the list, or to charge user fees, I know many are going to be hurt by that.

I look at the field of education with a good deal of sadness because education has always been a happy area, an area of energy, enthusiasm and goodwill. I've watched this government target those who are on the front line of the delivery of education services simply because it's politically good to do so. I understand that. I understand that if you bash teachers or bash people in the public sector, there is a certain segment of the population that thinks that's great. But you're discouraging people who want to help others, who want to help young people or older people to advance their education.

I've never seen morale so low as it is today, never seen it that low, and that's most unfortunate. These are the people who should be helping to bring about change. You should be enlisting their support, developing a consensus with them. But again, that's the style of this government. This government's style is confrontation: "Let's pick a fight, let's bully, let's intimidate. Let's pick a victim out there and have everybody say, 'Yeah, let's take a kick at that group in our society.'"

What you've forgotten is that many of these teachers, for instance, have mothers and fathers, and sisters and brothers, and neighbours and good friends and students out there who have worked with them and who are appalled by what you've done, your attack ads on them and the Premier constantly taking a kick at people in the education system.

There are going to be some disagreements from time to time with those in the system; I understand that. But it's the appalling attitude. The attitude that you've taken now is: "We've alienated them and now, having alienated them, what we're going to do is get the support of somebody else by alienating them. We know they're not going to get that."

Mr O'Toole: After 20 years you should know something. You are all things to all people; you don't stand for anything.

Mr Bradley: I must say to the member for Durham East that there are many people in this province who believe that your style of government is exactly an issue in this campaign. That's what it is.

Mr O'Toole: Take care, Jimmy.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Durham East, come to order.

Mr Bradley: If you want to put the boots to people because you know it's popular with others, I guess that's a style that you can stand for. I can tell you, I will never stand in this Legislature to victimize people so that I can get others on my side — people who cannot support themselves, who cannot defend themselves.

Mr O'Toole: Who are you picking on?

The Acting Speaker: Order, please.

Mr Bradley: You got into a fight over Bill 130, and it wasn't a fight between the government of Ontario and the teachers of Ontario. It was a fight between those who believe in a strong, vibrant, publicly funded, dynamic education system and those who do not; and those people who sit across from us do not.

You've brought disruption and disunity and chaos to the education system. We must return to an era of stability where people work together as a team, as they did under Bob Welch when he was Minister of Education, as they did under Tom Wells when he was Minister of Education, as they did under Larry Grossman when he was Minister of Education. All of those people knew how to work with people in our society and not to put the boots to them, as you right-wingers do, those with the hard edge to you.

1740

In post-secondary education you are bringing about a circumstance where soon only the very brightest or the very richest will be able to have access to the best positions in our universities and our community colleges. Your huge increases in tuition fees, your allowing rent control to disappear, getting rid of rent control, the new charges that are being levied on students, bring about a circumstance where a student has to either incur a tremendous personal debt or not choose a post-secondary education — that is, those who are able and desirous of attaining that.

That's why we believe you have to cut that tuition fee by 10% as a start. That's why we believe that you have to invest in our universities, so that we can compete around the world. Today, on a per-student basis in post-secondary education, Ontario invests the least of any province in this country. It's at the very bottom. We believe we must be at least at the national average, and do better than that in the future.

We believe part-time students should have access to student assistance, student loans that are available, and that students who work in the summer or when they're not going to school should be able to earn at least \$1,800

a year without being rendered ineligible for that kind of assistance.

I watch a style, I watch a pattern, I watch a government which is moving more and more towards a divided society: the very rich, the very privileged, and those who are disadvantaged in our society.

I look at what you've done to the environment by cutting —

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour): B-plus.

Mr Bradley: The member says B-plus. One report says B-plus. I hear that's going to be relegated downward since they found out what you're really up to, once they found out that you're going to allow the mining companies into those parks.

Hon Mr Flaherty: A lot better than you did as the Minister of the Environment. There's the Minister of the Environment right there. B-plus.

Mr Bradley: We will put our record on the environment, sir, against yours any day of the week. You have cut over one third of the employees of the Ministry of the Environment, those who are the policemen in the environment, those who do the testing, those who keep an eye on the polluters. You've thrown those people out the door, and those in the Ministry of Natural Resources. You have cut the budget of the Ministry of the Environment by up to 40%. You've elbowed it aside. You've passed legislation which weakens the role and responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment. As well, through regulations, through your so-called moving aside red tape, you've taken away from the Ministry of the Environment its ability to do its job.

You even took away from the present Minister of the Environment the responsibility for the Niagara Escarpment Commission. Norm Sterling, the one person on that side of the House who cared about and was dedicated to preserving the Niagara Escarpment and its lands, the Premier took out of it and gave the responsibility to the Ministry of Natural Resources. I have said in this House, and I will on many occasions say in this House, that if there's one criticism I would not render of that minister, it would be his concern for the Niagara Escarpment. Because of his strong concern, the Premier yanked him out of that responsibility, and now we have on the escarpment commission some people who believe it should be abolished and some people who believe in unfettered development. Some of the good old boys have been placed on it — not all of the appointments; some of them have been reasonable. But some of them are people who certainly are not there to defend the environment.

Ontario has become a paradise for toxic waste now. If you have toxic waste, send it to good old Ontario. There are so many areas where this government has abandoned the environment that it's sad to see that this government would undo what had been done in terms of the environmental leadership which Ontario had provided in years gone by.

One other area I wanted to touch on. I should say we're underserved in the Niagara region for doctors. I

heard about the ophthalmologists today. I can tell you that we have a long waiting line for ophthalmologists in the Niagara region.

What I want to touch on last is the movement of this government heavily into the field of gambling. If anybody in this province doesn't believe that if this government were re-elected we wouldn't see video lottery terminals in the bars and restaurants of this province, they are dreaming. This government wanted to place 44 new Mike Harris gambling halls — they called them "charity casinos" — in all of the communities, there to vacuum up all the money from those who were vulnerable, those who were desperate, those who had addictions. To see the Conservative Party doing this, and now bringing them in through the back doors simply by saying, "We'll put them all in the racetracks now" — unfortunately our racetracks in many cases have become in fact charity casinos, so-called casinos. There are more people playing the video lottery terminals or the slot machines that are there than are playing the horses. If there's a condemnation I have of this government it's allowing itself to move massively into the field of public gambling.

I understand we have some casinos which will make some sense — and my friend from Niagara Falls is here — Windsor, for instance. They're what we call "tourist casinos." But those charity casinos will just be there to take all the money out of the local community. I condemn this government for that and so much else.

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): I'm pleased to participate in the debate on the motion brought forward by Howard Hampton, our leader, in condemning the Mike Harris tax cut scheme that he's brought forward giving \$4.1 million per day back to the richest people in the province. The 6% upper-income people in the province are receiving over 25% of the income tax cut that is being taken out of health care, education, communities, the environment. The money has to go back into these programs.

We are proud of the fact that the New Democratic Party was first to lay out our campaign platform so that people could scrutinize it and get feedback to us on what the feeling was. We're happy that it's out there, and I'm getting good response as we travel around, compared to the bully tactics that Mike Harris has used, whether it's the bully tactics in firing 10,000 nurses when they first became the government and now saying they're going to hire them back; whether it's beating up on teachers and trying to create 100 or 150 tests out there so that they can screen out the teachers, which means firing them somewhere down the road if Mike Harris were to get re-elected. People are fed up with the bully tactics.

The tax cut that we're saying we would take back, which is \$1.5 billion, would be put back into health care, education, communities and the environment.

Having been travelling through a large number of ridings in northern Ontario, in the new riding that I'm presently preparing to challenge in the upcoming election — there's a lot of unemployment out there. If you ask

people did they benefit from the Harris tax cut, some of them are saying, "No, I didn't even get the cost of a cup of coffee in return." Yet we have unemployment in some areas that is 30%. There are no benefits from the tax cut that Mike Harris has put out there. It's hurting education, it's hurting the environment.

You find out that Mike Harris wants to issue a certificate — I guess Norm Sterling is going to sign the certificate — to create a huge dump or landfill site at the Adams mine in northern Ontario and they're going to welcome all the garbage going in there. There's not going to be a single job created as a result of the environmental disaster they want to create, polluting all the rivers from Kirkland Lake all the way down into the Sturgeon River and beyond. It's a silly plan that is out there, but it's hurting the people of northern Ontario.

1750

There was no consultation done when they cancelled the spring bear hunt and threw hundreds of people out of work as a result.

There was no final consultation on Lands for Life. We know that as you create more parks, the workers are going to be put at risk in northern Ontario as a result of the Minister of Natural Resources and Mike Harris saying, "We've got to hurry up and get this done and get it out of the way before the election is called because people might find out the true story of what is happening."

Northern Ontario is suffering. It shouldn't be suffering when you have a Premier from northern Ontario, but northern Ontario is suffering as far as health care, education and the environment are concerned. Community and property taxes are going up as a result of the cutbacks they've made to all the communities in order to feed their frenzy for giving a tax cut to the wealthiest people in Ontario. Why? Because there is no trickle-down effect by giving this money away. It's just hurting people unfairly as far as we in the New Democratic Party are concerned.

As I said before, I'm proud of our leader, Howard Hampton. We've put our platform out there, clearly ahead of the Conservative and Liberal parties. We're proud to be out there campaigning on it. You don't see any flip-flop back and forth from us. We're out there campaigning on it, we're proud of it and we're going to continue.

It's quite obvious from what's been happening in here and in the newspapers that the election campaign has been on for quite a period of time now. With the \$100 million that Mike Harris has been spending on advertising on American channels and all the Canadian channels, it's quite obvious that he thinks the election campaign is on; he just hasn't told us the date. Maybe tomorrow he'll tell us the date and we can get out there and truly campaign to elect the New Democratic Party in this province.

Mr Tony Silipo (Dovercourt): I'm glad to have the chance to wind up debate on this important resolution that we've put forward through our leader, Howard

Hampton, which is at the heart of what we believe the upcoming election is all about. We know we have been unofficially in this campaign for some time now, as my colleague Mr Len Wood just indicated, but I think it's fair to say that we may very likely within the next 40 hours be officially into the campaign.

We thought it was crucial, in this last opportunity we have before that happens, to talk very clearly in this Legislature today about the \$4.1 million that is being spent every day to provide a tax cut for the wealthiest citizens in our province, the top 6%, the richest 6% of citizens in our province. Not only does that represent 25% of all the tax cuts that Mike Harris has implemented, but it is also \$4.1 million a day that is not being spent in our hospitals, in our schools, in our colleges and universities, and in many of the other important services.

I've listened with great interest to the debate this afternoon and listened to the lines reiterated by the Conservative Party members across the way as to why they believe even more tax cuts is the way to go. At least we have the clarity of that position and we know where the two poles sit, if you wish. But we believe it's more important to put money into our important services of health care and education than it is to give a 30% tax cut to the wealthiest 6% of Ontarians. We believe this \$4.1 million a day is better spent in those services, that the \$1.5 billion that that accounts for on an annual basis should go into those important services.

I also listened with great interest to the position expressed by our Liberal colleagues today. I have a lot of respect for the member for St Catharines. As he has stood here today and analyzed and condemned and criticized the Mike Harris government, I don't think there is one word in what he said that I would have disagreement with. However, I found it really interesting and very telling that in the 50 minutes he spoke, he, and I'm assuming his party, never once told us why it is that if they are so against what Mike Harris has been doing, if they, like us, believe so clearly that what Mike Harris and his fiscal policy is doing is so wrong, they would continue the same tax cut that is at the heart of all of those cuts to services and which is at the heart of all of those increases in property taxes, user fees and in all of the myriad of other costs that most families are now having to pick up in order to pay for the 6% at the top who are getting this huge 30% tax cut. That is perhaps also telling in terms of the positions the people of Ontario will have a chance to judge all of us on as we venture out in what seems to be the official call a few days from now.

We stand proudly in defence of the many services that we have all built up, through successive governments in this province, in our health care system, in our education system, in many of our other community services, the very things that make Ontario a good place to live in. We want to maintain those services, which is why we believe it's crucial that the tax cut for that 6% be stopped and that the money be reinvested back into those services.

That's the position we will clearly take into the next election. It will be interesting to see where the Liberals eventually will stand on that.

Mr O'Toole: On a point of order, Madam Speaker: Earlier this afternoon I addressed the House, and I would like to correct the record. In my remarks, I made a reference that Bearskin Airlines was a \$1-billion industry. In fact, the tourism industry in northern Ontario is a \$1-billion industry.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Hampton has moved opposition day number 1.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour of the motion will please say "aye."

All those opposed will please say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members; this will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 1757 to 1802.

The Acting Speaker: Order. All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

Ayes

Boyd, Marion
Christopherson, David
Hampton, Howard

Lankin, Frances
Lessard, Wayne
Marchese, Rosario
Martel, Shelley

Pouliot, Gilles
Sliipo, Tony
Wildman, Bud
Wood, Len

The Acting Speaker: All those opposed to the motion will please rise.

Nays

Arnott, Ted
Bassett, Isabel
Beaubien, Marcel
Boushy, Dave
Bradley, James J.
Chudleigh, Ted
Danford, Harry
Doyle, Ed
Elliott, Brenda
Fisher, Barbara
Flaherty, Jim
Ford, Douglas B.
Fox, Gary
Froese, Tom
Galt, Doug
Gilchrist, Steve
Grimmett, Bill
Harnick, Charles

Hastings, John
Hodgson, Chris
Jackson, Cameron
Johns, Helen
Johnson, Bert
Johnson, David
Kells, Morley
Klees, Frank
Leach, Al
Leadston, Gary L.
Marland, Margaret
Maves, Bart
McLean, Allan K.
Miclash, Frank
Newman, Dan
O'Toole, John
Ouellette, Jerry J.
Parker, John L.

Preston, Peter
Ross, Lillian
Sampson, Rob
Saunderson, William
Shea, Derwyn
Sheehan, Frank
Skarica, Toni
Smith, Bruce
Spina, Joseph
Sterling, Norman W.
Stewart, R. Gary
Tascona, Joseph N.
Tilson, David
Tsubouchi, David H.
Turnbull, David
Wettlaufer, Wayne
Wood, Bob
Young, Terence H.

Clerk of the House (Mr Claude L. DesRosiers): The ayes are 11; the nays are 54.

The Acting Speaker: I declare the motion lost.

It now being past 6 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: I am so sorry, I take that back — until 6:30 of the clock this evening.

The House adjourned at 1806.

Evening meeting reported in volume B.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Arnott, Ted	Wellington	PC	parliamentary assistant (Small Business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Hon / L'hon Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, David	Oriole	L	
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	
Cullen, Alex	Ottawa West / -Ouest	ND	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre délégué à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (Agriculture and Food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	parliamentary assistant (Rural Affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjointe parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward- Lennox-Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	parliamentary assistant (Colleges and Universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Environnement
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
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Gouvernement
Publications



No. 6B

N° 6B

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Monday 3 May 1999

Lundi 3 mai 1999



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Monday 3 May 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lundi 3 mai 1999

The House met at 1830.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
AMENDMENT ACT
(CHILD WELFARE REFORM), 1999
LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE
ET À LA FAMILLE (RÉFORME
DU BIEN-ÊTRE DE L'ENFANCE)

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Orders of the day.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Speaker, the second order.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): The second order, second reading of Bill 6, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act in order to better promote the best interests, protection and well being of children / *Projet de loi 6, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille afin de mieux promouvoir l'intérêt véritable de l'enfant, sa protection et son bien-être.* Mrs Ecker.

Hon Mr Sterling: Before the minister speaks, I'd like to have unanimous consent to move a motion without notice with respect to Bill 6 and proceedings tonight on this act.

The Acting Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move that, notwithstanding any standing order relating to Bill 6, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act in order to better promote the best interests, protection and well being of children, when Bill 6 is next called — well, it has been called — two hours and 30 minutes shall be allotted to the second reading stage of the bill;

That, at the end of two hours and 30 minutes the Speaker shall interrupt the proceeding and put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill and the bill shall then be referred to committee of the whole House for immediate consideration and that 25 minutes be allocated for consideration of the bill at this stage;

That, at the end of that 25-minute period, the Chair of the committee shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all

remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto and report the bill to the House;

That, upon receiving the report of the committee of the whole House, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendment and at such time, the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

That the order for third reading of the bill shall then immediately be called and the time remaining in the sessional day shall be allocated to the third reading stage of the bill.

The Acting Speaker: Mr Sterling has moved that notwithstanding any standing — dispense? Dispensed. Shall the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I would like to ask unanimous consent that the two hours and 30 minutes allotted for second reading stage of this bill be split evenly between the three parties.

The Acting Speaker: Is it agreed? Agreed.

Hon Janet Ecker (Minister of Community and Social Services): I move second reading of Bill 6, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act in order to better promote the best interests, protection and well being of children.

I'll be sharing my time with my parliamentary assistant, Frank Klees, and, time permitting, with the minister responsible for children, Margaret Marland.

I'm very pleased to open debate on second reading of Bill 6, the Child and Family Services Amendment Act. As members well know, the purpose of these amendments is to provide new rules to ensure better protection of children at risk of neglect and abuse. They create new and stronger tools to enable front-line workers, professionals and the courts to do their jobs more effectively.

While the child protection system our government inherited in 1995 had some significant strengths, it also had some very troubling weaknesses. When I attended a meeting for provincial social services ministers in 1996 I saw that other provinces were facing similar challenges, and it helped to flag for me the need to examine our own system here in Ontario. In addition, the inquests into the deaths of children involved with children's aid societies and the report of the Ontario Child Mortality Task Force confirmed that some children were falling through the cracks.

But there was little consensus in those early days among child protection experts on what was required to fix the system. Some believed the answers lay simply in

more resources. Some blamed it simply on the lack of proper training for front-line workers. Others focused on the legislation, but there were conflicts over whether the problem was with how the Child and Family Services Act was written or with how it was being applied.

Our first conclusion was that by simply throwing more money at the child protection system, while certainly needed, we couldn't do that without a plan and without priorities, because it just did not make sense. Second, we recognized that there was little to be gained from tearing everything down and starting over. Instead, we recognized that we need to build on the existing strengths to create a stronger child protection system.

The more we looked at the challenges we faced and the experiences of other provinces, the more we recognized the need to focus on the foundations of child protection and on the right mix of tools and resources necessary to protect children.

Over the past three years, we've been putting these tools and resources in place through a step-by-step reform of Ontario's child protection system. These steps include the new risk assessment system, now in place across the province to help protection workers make more informed judgments about children at risk; and the new information database to link all CASs to enable front-line workers to track high-risk families wherever they may move and be alerted to past involvement with a child protection agency. The database is already installed in over 40 sites and will be in all 54 CASs by the end of May.

In addition, we put in \$15 million in new funding in 1997-98 for an extra 220 front-line workers and supervisors to improve other front-line support, such as the new database and better staff training. A commitment of \$170 million was made in the 1998 budget to be spent over three years for CASs to support the hiring of an additional 760 child protection workers and supervisors to continue to move forward with better staff training and also, very importantly, to revitalize foster care. The first phase of this funding went out last year.

In addition, as well as the new resources we also have been putting in place a new funding framework for child protection that will reflect actual service needs of CASs and will support more equitable planning and effective management of all of these reforms.

We have also established a new joint implementation advisory group to partner with the association of children's aid societies in guiding the critical path for child welfare reform.

We are also meeting with the Association of Native Child and Family Services of Ontario to discuss implementation of child welfare reform. Over the next few weeks, ministry staff will be in touch with the provincial association and the individual agencies about the next phase of the funding formula that will be flowing within weeks.

Child protection always involves very difficult questions for everyone involved, from front-line workers to health care professionals to the courts and to those of us

in government. The stakes are always high, because when child protection fails, hindsight asks no easy questions of any of us.

That is why we have proceeded carefully but steadily, why we have consulted with all sectors of the child protection system. We have received excellent advice that has guided all the steps I've mentioned. In November 1997, I appointed a panel of distinguished experts, led by Judge Mary Jane Hatton, to consider the recommendations we had received from the various inquests into child deaths and also from the child mortality task force. We also asked the members of this expert panel to give us their advice on the adequacy of the current child protection rules in the Child and Family Services Act. Following consultations with parents, with youths, with professionals in the fields of child welfare, health, justice, law enforcement and education, the expert panel delivered its report in the spring of 1998.

The principal recommendation of the panel was that the Child and Family Services Act needed to strike a better balance between the concerns for the family, which are important, and the best interests of the child. The panel told us that it must be made clear that the paramount purpose of the act is to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children. In plain language, when there are doubts about the safety of a child, they must always be resolved in the best interests of that child.

We listened to their advice and to the advice from the task force and the inquests, and that advice has been very helpful to us in developing a package of amendments that focuses on those areas most critical to better protecting children. The amendments we are considering today are the first significant changes to child protection legislation in Ontario in 10 years. Their purpose is to make clear that the legal framework for child protection puts the best interests of children first.

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Bill 6 focuses on those rules critical to improving the protection of vulnerable children in several very important areas.

First, the amendments make it clear that the Child and Family Services Act always puts the best interests, protection and well-being of children first.

Second, Bill 6 expands the grounds for finding a child in need of protection in three ways.

The threshold for triggering the protection of a child would be reduced from the current "substantial risk" to "risk that the child is likely to be harmed." This should result in earlier reporting and, where appropriate, earlier action taken to protect children.

To remove the uncertainty that exists in the current legislation concerning neglect, the words "pattern of neglect" would be included in the grounds for protection.

The amendments would improve protection of children in cases of emotional harm and the risk of emotional harm by lowering the threshold for that definition of emotional harm from "severe" to "serious." This means that the child would have to experience serious anxiety, depression, withdrawal, self-destructive behaviour or

delayed development, and the child would either not be receiving treatment to alleviate the harm or the harm would have to be caused by the parent.

I would also like to make clear that all the rules in the Health Care Consent Act would continue to apply concerning decisions about medical treatment and the parents' authority to make those.

The third key objective of this bill is to clarify requirements for the general public and professionals to report that a child is, or may be, in need of protection.

The fourth priority is the need to improve what is called "permanency planning" for children in the care of a children's aid society. The proposed amendments would encourage earlier planning of permanent arrangements by reducing the time children may remain in the temporary care of a CAS.

The fifth broad objective of these amendments is to improve the access of children's aid societies to the information they need to fulfill their protection mandate. Court processes would be streamlined and the grounds for obtaining information expanded. A CAS would be allowed to apply for a warrant or telewarrant to obtain information during the up to 21 days allowed for a protection investigation. In addition, CASs would be allowed to make an application to a court where the information may be relevant to monitoring certain court orders.

Sixth, the Child and Family Services Act currently does not address conduct towards a child who has not been under a parent's or caregiver's direct care in the past. In future, with these amendments, evidence of past conduct towards any child, and not just the child in the person's care, would be admissible in any child protection proceeding. In addition, this evidence could be admitted at any stage in a child protection proceeding.

Finally, Bill 6 provides for a mandatory review of the Child and Family Services Act at least every five years and for that report to be made public. This reflects the government's view that the legal framework for child protection must be reviewed regularly to ensure it is responding sensitively and effectively to changing needs. So not only are we changing those rules that will have the most positive impact on child protection now, but we are also laying the groundwork for future necessary improvements to this very important legislation.

As I mentioned earlier, effective child protection requires a careful mix of tools and resources for front-line workers, professionals and the courts. The step-by-step approach we have taken to reforming the child protection system is addressing each of these needs in a systematic and comprehensive fashion.

The ongoing investments and improvements I have described, combined with the amendments we are addressing today, will strengthen the foundations of child protection in Ontario. They will ensure regular review of the legislative framework, and they will ensure the consideration of future improvements. They also reflect the very broad consultations we have conducted and the helpful advice we have been given.

All of these changes provide children's aid societies and their workers with the tools and resources they need to better protect children. They make clear that the best interests, protection and well-being of children are always paramount and that protecting vulnerable children must always come first.

In closing, I would like not only to thank the members of the ministry staff for their work on this, but I would also like to recognize that we have in the gallery here this evening with us many of the individuals who helped us prepare these amendments: Mary McConville, Sandy Moshenko, both from the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies; Terry Daley, with the Toronto Catholic CAS; Melanie Persaud, who is also with the association; Bruce Rivers, who is with the Toronto CAS; Kristina Reitmeier, with the Toronto CAS; and Marv Bernstein, with the Toronto Catholic CAS. Also, from the expert panel, we have with us tonight Professor Nico Trocmé, and I understand his son Paul is with him in the gallery tonight; also, Theresa Ortiz and Dr Harriet MacMillan, who were very instrumental in helping us move forward in our reforms.

I'd like to thank the opposition parties also, whose consent is allowing us to proceed with this very important legislation this evening.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): I'll be splitting my time with members of my caucus as well this evening.

Let me begin by speaking briefly to the process we've endured to bring forward a better child protection bill and the disappointment we in the Ontario Liberal Party have had to have seen the stagnant, often moving-backward flow of this bill. People will remember that before Christmas, in fact in October, when the bill was first brought into the House, we had every intention of having the opportunity to go forward with hearings, which is an appropriate process for a bill of this importance and a bill that has this kind of impact on the lives of families and in particular on the lives of children.

We were very disappointed to see that once the bill had been introduced it was gone, never to be seen again until the 11th hour before Christmas, when suddenly it was revitalized and discussions ensued about how on earth we were going to finish discussion, debate and approving of this bill, and would we then start consideration of no hearings, no travelling in Ontario, no meetings with other groups. It occurred to us then that the government probably never did have any intention of allowing appropriate debate with this bill.

That is our greatest concern, that here we have a bill — in my view, one of the few times you would likely have all-party support for legislation — stymied instead by the process, because this government has never put children first, that has never been a priority. I would like to contrast that with the kind of priorities Mike Harris has had since he was elected in 1995.

From the very beginning, the cuts that hurt the most in Ontario were cuts that affected children. They were the ones who had no voice to bring forward their concerns or

the fact that they weren't getting service. One of the greatest impacts those cuts Mike Harris made had was specifically on children's aid and the clients and families those associations service, in every community across Ontario, both through children's aid societies and through children's mental health agencies that deal with these children and in the other part of the mandate of the children's aid society, which, for the most part right across Ontario, it has yet to fulfill in this term of government, and that is a prevention factor. The children's aids are also required to be operating in the area of prevention, so that families never get in crisis, so that children never are taken into care through children's aid.

I would probably guess, and be very close to suggest, that we cannot remember what year this decade the children's aid actually had the appropriate funding, time, staff and resources to engage in preventive measures, because they have been in crisis for that long.

During the years of the NDP, under the social contract, the children's aids were not spared in terms of the amount of funding that was taken away from them. When Mike Harris was elected, he made those cuts permanent, and then they continued. At that same time, families across Ontario became more in crisis than ever in the history of Ontario, and intake numbers at children's aid went through the roof. At the very same time that the law for child protection was for a long time viewed as inadequate, we also had very inadequate funding levels to deal with the cases we had. So yes, the bill has always been required. These amendments have been required for some time.

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To make matters worse, governments for the last several years have also not addressed the issue of appropriate staffing levels of children's aid. They have not addressed the issue of appropriate preventive behaviour and intervention for families so those families never got in crisis to begin with. The experts in the field, the professionals who deal with children, have often talked about, "Spend \$1 today and save \$7 tomorrow or down the road." That has always been the case in the area of intervention for children. When we talk about children's mental health agencies that often are the first line, day care centres that are often the first line that notice there may be something wrong with this child, that there's something going on in the family that we need to take a closer look at, these same agencies and professionals that work for children have never had the appropriate resources to step in and apply the kind of interventions to stop a family going down the road where eventually children's aid needs to be called.

The number of cases that children's aid societies have seen in Ontario has skyrocketed. That is not something this government can be proud of, because a number of policies brought forward by Mike Harris today in Ontario have caused that to happen. We have more financial crises in families today than ever before and in particular with families that were vulnerable to begin with. We have services that have been cut in the school system,

where identification often happened and intervention also happened. We have fewer psychologists who work for boards of education today in Ontario than ever in the history of our province. That is not something this government can be proud of. We have fewer sociologists, fewer people who work for boards of education to do the kind of intervention they used to.

All of those social agencies that have had the squeeze put on them over the last several years through the social contract, made permanent by the Mike Harris government, still today do not have the time or the energy or the extra resources to do that extra little bit those special children need. The result is that families move along that continuum into crisis faster than ever before.

Since this government was elected, they've made the motions of introducing all kinds of new funding formulas. I ask the people who are here representing the children's aids today in the gallery, how long have we been talking about a new way to fund children's aid? How many months ago did we have an announcement about reviewing and revising and coming up with a better formula? I ask the people who are up in the gallery today who have long been talking about work studies for the people who work for children's aid, how many people is enough to care for these children?

We still do not have a new model for funding of children's aid. Today in Ontario we have more debt on the backs of children's aid societies than ever in the history of the province and about the same amount in total as Mike Harris has spent on propaganda advertising for his own re-election campaign at the expense of taxpayers; more than \$100 million in contingency funding that is now in debt to children's aid. Is that something this government can be proud of, that they can honestly stand up today as heroes on behalf of children when we have more debt at the children's aid level than ever before?

We have a letter that has come to us from the professionals who work for children's aid. They said, "Unfortunately, when we met with officials from the Ministry of Community and Social Services in May 1998" — which is less than a year ago — "we were told in no uncertain terms that the government would not even consider participating in a workload study of any kind." The reason this is so important is that with the changes that will be coming, many of which we agree with in full, which we would advance ourselves, they will require more work, more time, more resources to implement.

If we have a crisis in the protection of children today with the current act that protects children — for a whole number of reasons, there is a huge number, an absolute, exponential growth in intake of children in the system today, more than ever before. We have the highest level of leaves of absence for people who work for children's aid and the highest level of sick time taken by those same workers. The stress levels have never been reported to be this high. The caseloads are very high.

That means the workers who work in the system today cannot manage the system today, and everyone acknowl-

edges that with the passing of a new, tougher law to protect children, more children will come into care, because you will raise the bar to get these children to safety. If we are inadequate in upholding the law today, what will that mean for the future when the law is passed? We still will not have the resources available to implement the new law.

I asked the people who represent the people from children's aid, the workers, "If you cannot support the law and enact it and make sure it is working for kids the way it is now, a weaker law, how will the children be better protected because you have better words in black and white, in law, tomorrow, so that at the end of the night tonight we can all stand proudly and say, 'Look at the strong law' that has nothing to do with the implementation of this on the front lines for those families that are in crisis today?"

Tomorrow we are not magically going to have the better number of resources so that the caseload per worker is improved. This is the gang that cut funding to children's aid, that continued to talk about a better funding formula for children's aid, that continues to talk about how, "We'll do something about that contingency funding." Instead, children's aids are spending money on banking services because they are in debt.

It was more than a year or two ago that Halton children's aid said: "Here are the keys to the children's aid. You run it." The London children's aid decided, against their better judgment, against what is in law, that they cannot be in debt: "Forget it. We're hiring 20 more workers. The government be damned. We need the people. The children are in crisis."

Those are the kinds of circumstances that are out there today with a weaker law, so let's not pretend that all of a sudden tomorrow morning we can all get up and feel good about ourselves because we've done better for the kids in Ontario. You have a record that you cannot run from in the area of children.

We have a 12-year-old boy who is discovered by his mother to have a loaded gun under his bed, and in an absolute terror and panic she calls the children's aid, only to be told: "We have no room for this boy. We can't do anything for you." That happened this year, only to find that we don't have residential programs to take these children in crisis to. You have fewer day programs today than you had last year, never mind when you were elected in 1995.

Those kinds of issues are intertwined with the new law that you want to create. Don't come into this House and laud this new risk assessment tool, because what it means for the workers who deal with the families is that each case takes more and more time to do the important work of tracking with this new assessment system. Don't laud yourselves because you have a new computer program that's going to do better tracking, because every one of those cases now takes more time. When you introduce those things, as good a tool as they are, a computer is useless if you don't have enough workers to work the system. Your caseloads have gone through the roof, and you haven't addressed the funding issue. What is the

point of having a Cadillac on the highway if you don't have the keys?

That's the point we are trying to make. We have said from the very beginning that in the area of children's services you need to properly fund in the right places. We've said from the beginning that you need to have intervention measures early. Why, if it is mandated in the act, have there not been any prevention programs at the children's aid level for years? Because they have been so cash-strapped and so busy dealing with the crisis in families since long before I can remember that they haven't been able to enact the law that currently exists, which everyone acknowledges is a weak law.

After tonight we're going to have a great new, strong law. Is that going to make it better for you, so that when the Toronto Star launches its next edition for a coroner's inquest, you can stand up and say, "Well, we have a great new, strong law"? These people have told you this from the beginning of time, and you haven't listened.

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When Dr Fraser Mustard released his report a couple of weeks ago, Mike Harris all of a sudden found religion. He all of a sudden decided, "Why, those early years are really important." So he introduced pilot projects. Where are those high-paid staffers who are usually sitting back there? Did anyone suggest to the Premier that he had actually cut those same pilot projects in his first year of government —

The Acting Speaker: You must address the House.

Mrs Papatello: — so that in his last, 11th hour before going back to the electorate he could stand up and announce the same pilot project that he himself had cancelled?

He has the gall now to talk about junior kindergarten and its importance, because sometimes that can be the first intervention that a professional has to see that there may be a child in need. Now he wants to talk about funding of junior kindergarten, after 22 school boards, equalling 60,000 children, have lost junior kindergarten under this government. That is your record.

Will you tell me why, after an opposition party, for the first time in the history of the Ontario government —

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [children's issues]): It's three school boards without junior kindergarten.

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): The school boards cut them as you didn't give them enough money.

The Acting Speaker: Order.

Mrs Papatello: For the first time, in 1995, the Ontario Liberal Party announced a critic for children's issues, and after a year or so, the government responded by enacting a mere figurehead position of a minister without portfolio for children, responsible for something or other; we haven't figured out what. The fact of the matter is, it was for show. You had a minister responsible for children who had no budgetary authority. We could never figure out what the mandate was. It had some office or other somewhere with staffing, and it made it look like, "We've got this focus on kids." You had no control

through this minister to make sure that cuts weren't affecting children negatively. You had no authority through this minister, when Mike Harris was cutting the pilot projects that were so critical, that Dr Fraser Mustard today is advancing as critical for early years development, to say, "Hey, those are the things we cut."

Instead, what we had in 1995 was a government that cut every single children's planning council in every region across Ontario. Then we had this new minister for children say: "I'm going to have to do a tour. We're going to have to go around Ontario to see exactly the kinds of children's programs that exist out there." We said, "You know, that's exactly what the children's planning councils had for you, but you cut those in 1995." Maybe we could have taken all that money and actually used it, say, for a contingency fund or two for some of those children's aids that are paying debt servicing charges because they have the greatest debt they have ever had, because you cut the children's aid while you were at it.

I want a children's minister in this House who is actually going to protect children, who will actually stand up and say, "We need to have intervention services before those kids are in crisis." We are talking about a government that has advanced a "making services work for people" document, with all of the euphemisms and jargon, that essentially boils down to the theme of, "We as government will only help those most in need." That is just another language for, "Children will continue to be in crisis, and when they get into crisis, we'll have to intervene." That is cruel treatment of children in Ontario. That is cruel treatment of our very youngest citizens, who deserve better attention than that.

We would have children who may have been identified for four or five years and not have intervention services available to them because the system has been cut. Those are the children who are ending up in the now cash-strapped children's aid. Police officers on the street will tell you that they could identify the children 10 years before; when they now are picking them up for shoplifting, they can identify them. What kind of cruelty are we advancing when we won't go forward and intervene sooner than that, when we actually have to get them into the child protection system?

We must equate these two discussions tonight while we advance this bill, which we hope will be a good bill. The truth of the matter is that with no public hearings, all we can do is read the final report of the expert panel the government put together. Here is a government with no respect for Her Majesty's loyal opposition or the role that an opposition plays in the House. We need to see, through a public hearings system, that people come forward to speak openly and freely about what they feel is wrong with a bill that will then affect all of our lives. Why can we not have the comments —

Mr Wayne Wettlaufer (Kitchener): Why didn't you let it pass in December?

Mrs Papatello: The member for Kitchener ought to know better, because this government, even in Decem-

ber, would not have allowed hearings. I think you should get your facts straight before you shoot your mouth off. There are comments here from the —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Order. Address the Chair. Don't address the member for Kitchener.

Mrs Papatello: Thank you, Chair, and the member is wrong. The Ojibway Tribal Family Services, for example, ought to have had the opportunity — and here we have Colin Wasacase, the OTFS executive director, who expresses extreme concerns about the treatment of native children under this new, stronger law. We do have a ministry responsible for native issues. Have they had any intervention in the creation of this new law? The minister, who is here in the House this evening with us, has he had any intervention to say, "By the way, what is that doing for children of the native community?" Had we had a public appeal process, we might have found out what all their concerns were, because they are not addressed in this bill the way it's written.

In fact, he says they "continue to be extremely concerned as to the devastating effects of proposed amendments to the CFSA the child protection bill will have on children and families of our First Nations communities. There is an absence of respect and due consideration that should be given to the extensive customary supports that are available within our First Nation communities to enable our children to remain where they belong. Our first-hand experience of what occurs when our children are apprehended and placed in non-native foster homes" is critical to them because from the native community perspective they want to keep their children in their communities. Something needs to happen to ensure that this be done. At the same time the government, through its law, has to make sure those children are all protected.

Going back to the workload crisis in children's aid, it isn't as though the minister and the government hadn't been aware of the crisis in workloads. I did tours with workers on the job to see the kind of workload they were dealing with and the kind of hours they kept. I have to say that the lion's share of all of the people who work in this system will likely never be millionaires at their job. They come to this kind of work as a vocation, as opposed to a job, because they can't be doing it for the money or the hours. The work is gruelling. These are the kinds of individuals who go into their own pocket to buy the special prom dress for the little girl who just doesn't have the money. These are the kinds of people who go home thinking about these cases night after night, to see that those kids they're really worried about are going to be safe.

How has the government responded to that, and what allowance is the government, through its funding models, measures or levels, giving to the children's aid so that they can make sure we don't just push them all right over the bridge? So many of them are on the edge now. I must read this letter — just a portion — from Leah Casselman of OPSEU. I think you need to understand how critical

the workload issue is, and it's not new just this term. It was the same case under the NDP government as well.

"The workload crisis in children's aid societies across Ontario has never been more critical as agencies struggle to comply with new standards and guidelines for investigations, new recording expectations and the dramatic increase in reports of child abuse and neglect. As a result, our members are deeply concerned about their ability to properly protect children in their communities and are concerned that children are now more at risk than ever."

I want to ask the members opposite one question: When in the history of anyone's experience as an employer or an employee would you ever offer the opportunity to tell the world that you can't do your job unless it were true? When would you ever go forward and say, "We can't do this"? Everyone wants to say they're able to do their work, but in this case they know that because of their workload, because they're not getting through their cases, because they know they need to do more for every one of those cases, they're not meeting it. They know their people are going home thinking, "I should have been able to do more." That becomes the government's responsibility.

There were a number of people, especially those representing foster parents, who were very kind to submit some information to us. Rick Crandall from the Hamilton area, who is president of the foster parents' association from that region, said very clearly:

"Are our MPPs culpable in the death of baby Tamara Thomas? The recent death of baby Tamara Thomas in Toronto only highlights the tragedy of our MPPs' failure to act responsibly and pass the now dead Bill 73. They not only failed to act upon inquest recommendations, but they continue to handcuff protection workers and are leaving our most vulnerable children at risk."

This from foster parents who live and breathe the system every day. I thank Rick for those remarks because that's not going to go away tomorrow.

1910

When the bill is passed tonight, I don't want the minister or ministers breaking open the champagne because you managed to get a bill through. You hurried us through with no hearings, a horrible process for probably the most important bill the government has had in the last four years. Even in this important matter, you couldn't get it right when you had all-party support for this topic. You failed these children. Tomorrow morning when we wake up, the system will still be vastly underfunded, there won't be enough protection workers and the workers will still go home every night and wonder, "Have I been able to do enough, and have I been able to get the services to that family?"

Hon Mrs Marland: I'm not sure in debate whether I rise as the member for Mississauga South or the minister responsible for children. In either hat, I'm very proud to stand in support of this bill this evening.

I think what is really unfortunate, for those people who haven't been around quite as long as some of us and

don't know the history of what their government did when they were in office, and yet —

Mr Gerretsen: Nobody cares. Why don't you fix whatever the problem is now?

The Acting Speaker: Member for Kingston and The Islands.

Hon Mrs Marland: You see, you can't stand a debate. We didn't interrupt your member, and I think in fairness it would be nice for you to show some graciousness, which I hope you're capable of.

For the member for Windsor-Sandwich to get up with such a vitriolic style that is so personally attacking of people in the government is one style of debate. Another style of debate is to do your homework. I'm quite sure that whether or not you agree with the member for Beaches-Woodbine, you will find a difference in the calibre of debate. The member for Beaches-Woodbine does her homework and she, I'm quite sure, has read the Early Years Study.

The member for Windsor-Sandwich said that since Dr Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain released the Early Years Study, and I quote, "The Premier found religion." What this member forgets is that asking Dr Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain to do the study was the sole decision of one person in this province: Premier Mike Harris. He is the person who, for the first time in the history of this province, decided to put children first to the point where he did appoint a minister responsible for children and a children's secretariat. It may well be that the member for Windsor-Sandwich doesn't understand what that role is or what that has represented, and yet the very fact that I was not given a full-line ministry speaks volumes, because —

Mrs Pupatello: You should thank me for your job, Minister. You wouldn't have had a ministry —

The Acting Speaker: Member for Windsor-Sandwich, you had your turn.

Hon Mrs Marland: What it means is that I had no strings tied to any encumbrances of ministries in terms of allegiance or a loyalty. I could look very closely at everything that came to the cabinet table in terms of whether there was an impact on the children in Ontario, and that is the best part.

Just to get back to the Early Years Study, the Premier first of all met with Dr Fraser Mustard himself and then decided that he would like to step forward, make the appointment of a minister responsible for children and then commission this study. I think to make the kinds of comments the member has made speaks volumes about the fact that she doesn't understand the study. Apart from the fact that it has very worthy recommendations and she knows full well that our government has endorsed this report, the report itself commends our government on what we've been doing, commends our government on the early intervention programs.

She speaks of how important early intervention is — absolutely right — but did the Liberal government in its five years develop any early intervention programs? At

least the NDP government developed Better Beginnings, Better Futures. I was here and that's the problem, you see. That member may have got her researchers to do some work, but I certainly recall that all the concerns you're referring to tonight were concerns when the Liberals were the government sitting on this side of the House.

So we introduced Healthy Babies, Healthy Children, a program that our government is particularly proud of. It's a new program in which we have already doubled the funding from \$10 million to \$20 million. Next year it's \$50 million a year because we recognize that that is the amount of money that is needed. Once the program started, the people involved in the program said, "It needs more money." We have committed more money to it.

That's a program that for the first time will screen every newborn baby, and on average, for the last two or three years, that has been 150,000. Every newborn baby is screened at birth as to whether they will be at any kind of risk. From that screening, they are then referred to the intervention and prevention program. Whatever they require, they are hooked into those local community-based programs.

You know also that another program, which is an early intervention program which our government has introduced and also increased the funding for, a critical program, is the preschool speech and language program. Where children start school with a severe communications problem, therefore a socialization problem, low self-esteem, that particular problem becomes compounded.

Interjections.

Hon Mrs Marland: Mr Speaker, I believe interjections are out of order, and I would appreciate the House being respectful of that.

The fact that we have now moved first is tremendously exciting. I congratulate all the work that Dr Fraser Mustard, the Honourable Margaret McCain and the 10 members of their reference group put into that report. The 10 people in that reference group are all very well known, renowned experts in all of their individual fields. I think to talk about the report in such an offhand way insults those people who produced that report, who in turn commended our government on the work we've done so far and gave us a pathway to go in the future. That member knows we made that commitment in the throne speech a week ago, and to criticize the Premier by saying — in fact, the expression is ridiculous, so I won't even repeat it, because I really don't want to give credence to it.

I feel particularly confident about the future of children in this province in that now very-high-priority area of protection. What is in this bill that we are about to pass tonight are those areas that have been thoroughly researched, that the people who work in the field, all the professionals in many different areas who are involved with child protection, have been asking for for a very long time. It's our government that has brought the bill forward; it's our government that is amending the Child

and Family Services Act for the first time in over a decade. I'm very proud of that, as the minister responsible for children, and I'm particularly proud of the commitment by the Minister of Community and Social Services who, with her staff, has worked extremely hard to get that legislation drafted. She herself would tell you that the commitment was a personal one on her part. That's why things work, and because the Premier made a personal commitment on his part for the future of children in this province by appointing Dr Fraser Mustard and the Honourable Margaret McCain to do their study.

1920

One of the recommendations Dr Fraser Mustard made, as a matter of fact, not in the report but in his meeting with the Premier, was that there should be a minister who could speak for children at the highest level possible, which is the cabinet table. It's not about having a budget and another 20,000 staff and a whole bureaucracy; it's a matter of somebody being there who looks at what every ministry in government does for children. I'm very grateful to have had that opportunity; I'm very grateful to the Premier for giving me that privilege of being the first minister for children in the history of this province. I look forward to the impact of this bill that is before us tonight because of the partnership and dedication of the Minister of Community and Social Services and her staff who drafted it.

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): I find it truly unfortunate that we have a bill before us here that did not go to committee hearings. This is yet another slam in terms of how this government feels about northern Ontario. There were a good number of people, a good number of my constituents, in northern Ontario who were looking forward to making comments, making recommendations in terms of this particular piece of legislation, the Child and Family Services Act, and the amendments to it. They certainly were very disappointed that they did not have a chance to do that.

As has been mentioned earlier, the Ojibway Tribal Family Services is an agency that services a good number of communities in my riding. They are truly very upset that their concerns, their traditions and their background were not taken into consideration when it came to this bill. They make a very strong statement. I think this is one of the strongest statements I have ever heard against any government that has drafted a bill. They say: "To suggest that these proposed amendments promote 'cultural genocide' would not, in our belief, be an improper statement. How else does one characterize a child being forcibly removed from their First Nation community and thus being deprived of their rightful heritage and First Nations family entitlement." That's one of the strongest statements that has ever been directed to a piece of legislation in this Legislature.

A good number of those agencies are feeling that this government had no respect, absolutely no idea of their cultural backgrounds, how they could fit into the legislation. They're extremely upset. They go on to say:

"We sincerely believe that the proposed amendments...do not acknowledge the predominant role the First Nation must assume in intervention and support for our children. It is our urgent recommendation that, rather than giving additional and intrusive powers to the CASs, it would be more appropriate to provide additional financial resources to organizations such as the Ojibway Tribal Family Services and to First Nation communities so that culturally appropriate" — again, I go back to culturally appropriate — "family supports and prevention programs may be instituted." These are statements made with regard to this legislation, which showed total neglect for our First Nation cultures and for some of the problems they have had to put up with.

We've talked about Children First in this Legislature a good number of times. Our party will be going into the next election with a very important document. It actually puts children where they belong: It puts children first. By ignoring its responsibility, this government just shows how it feels towards the needs of one part of our society that needs the most protection. Again, it's truly uncalled for in terms of not allowing not only people from northern Ontario and First Nation communities, but people from across the province, to have had input into this very important piece of legislation. There's a lot of distrust of this government, what they have done in terms of this particular piece of legislation, and a lot of real concern among First Nation communities throughout Ontario.

Ms Lankin: Let me begin the debate on this bill by recalling for all of us the reason we're here debating this tonight. I want us to remember Lisa McLean, I want us to remember Shanay Johnson, Angela and David Dombroskie, Jamie Lee and Devin Burns, Kasandra Hislop Shepherd, Margaret and Wilson Kasonde, Jennifer Kovalskyj-England — children who died in this province, children whose deaths were examined by a coroner, where reports were issued, recommendations upon recommendations have been issued, recommendations which an expert panel was struck to look into, recommendations to a government, and a bill based largely on those recommendations was brought forward.

Many people in this House know my thoughts and my concerns about how the government has handled this bill in terms of process, and how many people, unfortunately, well-intentioned people in various stakeholder groups, bought into the government's agenda on process. I think that's shameful, but I'm not going to waste the precious time we have tonight in this House to talk about a matter of such important public policy and a bill that I believe is so important to once again castigate the government on process — although I know it's on the record, and it's something I will remember for a long time in terms of how this government has set its legislative priorities.

Why, then, in the last minutes of a government, would we agree to such an abysmal process, taking a matter of such public importance and allowing it to be rammed through the Legislature in one evening sitting, without proper attention being given to the details in the bill and without proper hearings from members of the public who

have points of view? I guess I come back to reading out those children's names. I guess that's the reason, because the one thing above all that the bill does is bring into the realm of legislative protection the issue of children who are neglected. For years the issue of neglect was not a ground for children being given protection. The bill corrects that, and it's good in that respect.

Those children whose names I read out — I know all of us feel the emotion, when you think about that — those children who died, unfortunately are just the tip of the iceberg. There are many more children who are neglected than there are children who are actually abused, believe it or not, in our great province. Neglected children, because of the sheer number, are far more likely to be reported to children's aid societies, are far more likely, in the end, to reach a point of crisis and perhaps even to die. They're far more likely to have a range of problems throughout their years — dropping out of school, health problems, a whole range of things — which until now there has not been an ability for us as a society to intervene in, to do something with the power of the law behind us.

Of course, there have always been mechanisms, if resources were put in place — early intervention and prevention resources. But we know, despite some of the statements that have been made by members of the government, that those resources are lacking, that there aren't enough, and there haven't been enough for a long time. The force of the law allowing child protection workers to act in a situation of neglect is an important change that is happening in this legislation tonight.

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We also know that while improving the law is not going to be the total answer, some of the recommendations made by the expert panel which are being enshrined into legislation may save some lives and may allow our child welfare system to do a better job of protecting children. I say "may," and I want to come back to that in a moment because I think there are some pretty important caveats to place on this debate about the importance of the actual legislative framework, and I want to have an opportunity to do that.

As we look at the bill, it has been pointed out that we only have in front of us what the minister and the government chose to bring forward. We don't have the benefit of comment and discussion with members of the expert panel, for example. They weren't allowed to come before a hearing, because the government didn't allow hearings to be held. We don't have the points of view of those who hold some contrary opinions.

But we do know some things. We know that the government didn't bring forward all of the recommendations from the expert panel. I had hoped perhaps tonight in the debate we might have heard from some government members. I know the parliamentary assistant has yet to speak, and perhaps he might address some of these points.

The expert panel, for example, talked about extending child protection to 16- and 17-year-olds. The government chose not to do that. Why? Shouldn't we have that

discussion? Shouldn't we know, at the same time the government has cut support to social assistance programs to 16- and 17-year-olds and placed tremendous restrictions on them? We're saying: "You're on your own. You can't have government support if you're leaving a situation unless you can prove it's a situation of abuse, but we're not going to give you the tools legally to prove it's a situation of abuse, because children's aid society child protection workers don't have the right to step in and make a finding." Why? What's the contradiction? That was a recommendation of the expert panel. Why was that ignored?

The panel recommended including exposure to domestic violence and significant substance abuse by a parent or another person having charge of a child as grounds for protection. Why did the government refuse to implement that recommendation? What were the reasons behind that? What was the concern?

I can imagine there might be some concerns that would be raised by those who are working in the women's shelter and family violence sectors about whether or not there would be a chilling effect on reporting of situations of family violence if there was a fear that children might be removed from the family as a result of that. We might have heard that if we had been allowed to have some discussion about this very important recommendation; we might have been able to weigh the thoughts and concerns of thoughtful, concerned people on both sides of the issue and make a decision as legislators. But the government made that decision, for what reason we do not know.

The expert panel recommended that in certain circumstances there be adoption with contact or that access be allowed after adoption had taken place, access by the natural parents or the parents who were in charge at the time a protection order was put in place. There may be grounds, for reasons of stability and healthy development of the child, to allow continued access. That provision was not included in the amendments. Why? It was part of the expert panel recommendations the minister has referred to over and over again, yet that wasn't included. We don't know why.

Relaxing adoption disclosure regulations: This is another whole area. I know if the member for Riverdale were able to take part in the debate tonight, she would want it stressed that the minister had on many occasions promised those in the community who have been looking for adoption disclosure changes that when the bill, the Child and Family Services Act, was opened up for any amendments, that issue would be addressed. Of course, we know that whole set of provisions and any amendment to it and any debate about it has been swept under the rug. We don't know why. We don't know why the government is refusing to move on that, particularly when there have been resolutions and private members' bills passed by all three parties in the House, but that's not here.

However, despite those shortcomings, many people who are involved in child protection would argue that, on balance, the changes are important enough that the bill

should go ahead. In fact, they have argued that, vociferously. I wish they had been as vociferous in their argument with the government that it deserved public hearings, but so be it. The bottom line, and I agree with them on that, is that we are able to pass the legislation.

I want to talk about some of the concerns we might also have heard on a range of issues if hearings had been held. One of the things we would have heard is how the bill doesn't address, at all, issues of prevention. Granted, the expert panel's report was around issues of child protection and the bill follows in the line of those recommendations to a certain degree. I've noted some exceptions already. But the whole area of prevention, the whole area of positive support to parenting, is something that lies outside of the bill and has been failed abysmally by this government's actions in a whole range of areas.

I note one of the additional grounds, one of the definitions that has been added to the legislation, along with severe psychological harm, for example, is delayed development. Well, what about the supports to the associations for community living, the way in which the funding has been cut, the way in which families dealing with children with delayed development are scratching everywhere they can to try to put together the services to meet their family's needs?

What about children with multiple developmental problems, physical and emotional, who seek help through children's treatment and rehabilitation centres, where the budgets have been frozen for over six years now, promising a review which is just being completed and they're being told won't be implemented until some time in the year 2000, after the government sorts it out with other reviews of other children's sectors?

What about the growing waiting lists and the need for early intervention? There are over 3,600 children on waiting lists for children's treatment centres right now. The delay in getting treatment is somewhere in the six- to eight-month range. How does that accord with legislation that will allow child protection workers — or not allow, will suggest that they need to move in early to protect a child who is at risk of likelihood of suffering delayed development because of situations in the home when the services aren't there to help? The whole prevention side is missing.

Let me talk about children's mental health. There are over 7,000 children and youth on waiting lists for services for children's mental health. Many of those families are stretched beyond their own resources, not just financially but emotionally, to be able to cope, to be able to provide the kind of loving support for a child who is troubled. Many of those parents recognize the early warning signs. They are crying out for help. The government's response in terms of the legislation may provide a protection regime to remove the child from that situation, but what it doesn't do is start before that to try to provide the supports to the family and get the treatment that's necessary for the child or for the youth in a timely fashion to prevent the family from hitting the point of crisis where child protection agencies need to step in.

I could go on on that point, but let's talk about just within children's aid societies themselves and their circumstances. You've heard there haven't been the additional resources put into prevention. What about the necessary resources simply to deal with the increased workload as a result of a whole range of cutbacks in family and social services and community services, families at greater risk, at greater stress, more kids in need of support and help and protection, along with new risk assessment tools which take a dramatically longer period of time to implement, and rightly so — they're much more thorough — along with inadequate funding and rising caseloads? Let's just talk about that for a moment.

Let's talk about some other recommendations the government seems to have ignored. Let me look at the report on the inquests into the deaths of children. I referred to these earlier. There are a lot of recommendations here which found their way into the expert panel's report and into government action.

Let me take a look at the recommendations around the funding formula. They talk about providing adequate resources to meet "agreed upon caseload-workload standards." What are they referring to when they talk about "agreed upon" standards? If you look down further in the recommendations, it says, "develop and adopt caseload-workload standards in conjunction with...the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies, the Ontario Public Service Employees Union...for the child protection functions prescribed in the Child and Family Services Act," its regulations, standards and guidelines established for practice.

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OPSEU, I can tell you — it's a union I've had a long affiliation with — has for months been attempting to get the government to sit down and do a joint workload study to develop the appropriate standards around caseloads. We know there are international standards. You're already seeing workers in the system anywhere from 30% to 38% to 40% over international standards for caseloads. The government has failed to address that. The minister has spoken about putting in \$90 million over the next three years, but I have to say that while I applaud moving from a funding system which had a base budget and contingency funding where over the years, with increasing caseloads, we saw the contingency funding being used each year as a matter of course, while I applaud rolling that into the base budget, that's not addressing higher caseload. That's simply maintaining the status quo, but in a much more secure way so that children's aid societies supposedly will know what their budgets are.

Let me just say a word about that. We are already into the second month of this new fiscal year, and as of last week — I don't know if anything has changed on Friday or today — children's aid societies had not yet had their budgets confirmed. The minister knows I have, for almost two months now, been attempting to get from her ministry detailed notes on the new funding formula and how it's being implemented. I've appealed to her

ministry, I've appealed to the minister's staff, I have appealed to the minister personally; I am still without any of that information.

Mr Gerretsen: There probably isn't a formula.

Ms Lankin: The formula, it appears, is still a work in progress. Children's aid societies, it appears, are still waiting for their budget numbers. Some have had their budgets cash-flowed on the basis of last year's budgets. Some have had their money pro-rated cash-flowed on the basis of last year's actual expenditures. Others, as you have heard, have decided to borrow and take out lines of credit against what they think their budget is going to be under the new formula.

These are issues that are critical, because these are issues about how we resource this new legislation that is coming into effect. If studies like those done by the Ottawa-Carleton Children's Aid Society and their workers about the new risk assessment tool are correct, where it shows that it takes up to six hours to properly use that tool, I think their analysis was that they would have to almost double their staff to deal appropriately with the caseload.

What is the problem here? What does that mean? What it means is that in legislation where you are dramatically changing the threshold at which point child protection workers will step in to say that there are grounds where a child needs protection, step in to remove a child from a family, where they don't have the time to properly implement and use the new tools — the very good, thorough new tools that are being provided by the government — the worker is left in an absolutely untenable situation.

The expectation is to move in quicker, to ensure that our children are not at risk, and we would all want that. But the inability, in terms of the volume of caseload they have, to spend the appropriate amount of time to assess that risk in the way that it should be done, with files sitting on their desk, mounting up, in which they might know or might fear that any day one of those children might become one of the children whose death is going to be looked into next by the coroner, leaves children's aid workers in an absolutely untenable position. In the issue of budgeting for the actual implementation of this legislation, the new so-called tools that are being provided to support this legislation, as well as the issue of prevention, must be addressed if this is to be at all meaningful.

I want to talk about some of the provisions of the legislation that have given people out there some concern. Again, these are things that warranted discussion in public hearings, because I think there might be answers to some of these. But we don't know what answers would have been in the minister's mind, or perhaps even in the expert panel and what they might have said.

There's a concern about the change in the threshold in the definition of a child in need of protection. As the minister referred to earlier, the existing legislation talks about "substantial risk" that a child will suffer, and then there are a number of categories of definition of harm;

for example, physical harm, or that "the child has been sexually molested or sexually exploited" due to the acts of a parent or a failure of a parent to adequately care for, provide for, supervise or protect the child. The threshold, though, is the first part of that phrase that I read out, "substantial risk that the child will suffer." Those words, as the minister again pointed out, are being changed to "a risk that the child is to suffer harm." Some people in the area of family law are asking: "What is the definition of 'risk'? Of what proportion is the risk? Is it any risk? Is there a threshold in the definition of 'risk'?"

We know this will evolve through the courts, we know this will be tested out over time, but what's the expectation? Perhaps some discussion among people about that might have given some clear thought; perhaps the legislators might have been able to talk about it after the hearings in third reading debate in a way that would give instruction to judges in the future in terms of what our intent was. That opportunity is missed.

The concern is that we have a risk of unstated proportion that a child is likely — well, again likely. I guess that's more than a possibility; perhaps it's a probability. If there's a risk that they're likely to, maybe it's a possibility that they probably will suffer harm.

I don't want to nitpick around words, because what we're dealing with here are kids' lives, and this is critically important, but I want to stress that the words carry with them legal meaning and legal import and that courts will in fact interpret those.

Minister, you shake your head. Maybe you've got all of the answers because maybe you worked beside these people through the whole process and you had the opportunity to talk to them, to question and to listen to them, but no other legislator in this place had that same opportunity or got to hear the debate between well-intentioned people and experts in family law and the expert panel, the children's aid society and child protection workers. No one else got to be a party to that, nor do we know how you took into account any of these issues and/or came to the consideration and the determination that you did.

One of the things we know is that the law, as it currently stands and as it will be amended, gives no guidance to what constitutes inadequate levels of care provision, supervision or protection. We know the cases are going to, in a sense, boil down to conclusions by some people. I imagine those people will include social workers and judges, and hopefully it will be reflective of some kind of community standard or sense of norm around parenting and what we expect of parents, but it's not clear. Perhaps that's an area where we could have spent a bit of time, again, exploring whether or not there was some more explicit language to give greater guidance in terms of what we are talking about.

Some of the members opposite I know often comment when we read about shocking cases in the newspaper involving young people. There's often comment from the government benches: "Where were the parents? What were the parents doing? It's the responsibility of the

parents." It's a big theme and issue over there, parental responsibility. The legislation is silent in terms of what standards we will apply in assessing that. I think the standards that will evolve through the courts will probably be reflective of community norms, but I don't know that. I'd like to have that debate, because I think the standards of some of the members in the party opposite would be quite different from those of some of the members on this side of the Legislature. But it's not a debate that we will be able to have.

I want to talk about some of the importance of what the bill does around permanency planning. I think this is a really critical area. The change, for example, from two years to one year in the legislation, in the sense of moving much quicker to give a sense of what the permanent plans for the child will be, is very important, but there are some caveats that have to be expressed. In the situation where you have a long, drawn-out court battle, it is not inconceivable that it will take a year for some of these matters to get to court. What does that mean in terms of the issues affecting children in that particular case, in that particular family? It may be that the parents are willing to facilitate change that would create the stable home setting and that we would all feel, with those changes, that the best solution may be for the children to remain — or to return. But it may well take a year or more, particularly given the cuts to services that have taken place, for the parents to get the help they need.

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If we're talking about alcohol or drug rehabilitation services, or mental health and counselling services, or parenting courses or marital counselling or even budgeting classes, these things are no longer readily available in our communities — perhaps some attention to that side, as well, to ensure the resources are there so that appropriate and timely permanency planning can be put in place. That might be something we would have talked about had there been the appropriate time to examine elements of the bill.

There are people who raised concerns that the intervention I mentioned before between the commencement of an application and a trial can be abysmally long. How do we rationalize that? Perhaps we need the resources to ensure there is an expeditious resolution or an expeditious processing of these applications so that we can also implement the expeditious time frame for permanency planning.

I support the recommendation. I support that amendment. I'm just saying again that for it to be meaningful and to work, there are other pieces that need to be done, and we haven't had an opportunity to talk about that.

There are people who have written to me and who have raised concerns around things like warrants for records and what the thresholds are under which warrants can be issued. Who issues them and what records? We haven't had a chance to talk about that and how you balance the very legitimate need to ensure that child protection workers and judges and others who are going

to be making decisions have access to the appropriate information about the nature of parenting and any concerns there may be around the family home with safeguards against privacy to ensure there aren't abuses of a new, more open regime.

I ask the parliamentary assistant perhaps to explain about the actual change in threshold that is being suggested here, where a motion can be brought to court on notice to the person affected for access to records under the existing system that might be relevant to consideration of whether a child is suffering. In the new system, the person does not need to be notified. The matter of records: It can be for all records regarding that person. It isn't the same threshold of relevancy to the actual issue of consideration.

With a society that has developed fairly strong mores around safeguarding of privacy, I hope the courts will implement this judiciously, but it is an extraordinary leap from where we are today. It is important that we ensure timely access to the appropriate and relevant records. Is this the right way to do it? We haven't had the benefit of any discussion on this. We haven't even had the benefit of having the privacy commissioner come before us and comment on this section of the bill, because there weren't the hearings. So we don't know whether there are concerns the privacy commissioner would have with respect to that and whether or not the appropriate balance has been struck. It would have been useful, would it not, for us as legislators to at least be reassured that the government's course of action on this is the appropriate one with respect to achieving its goals?

Duty to report: a change in terms of the obligation on professionals and the attachment of a penalty for failure to report. One of the questions I would have liked to know about that is why there is a prohibition on a professional, having made the determination and recognizing the need to report that, being able to delegate it to a staff person within their operation to do the reporting. It seems to me that many professionals would probably, in most cases, pick up the phone and do it themselves; there's not a problem with that. But there may be occasions when that becomes very problematic. What was the reason for the prohibition? There is probably a really good reason. I don't know the answer, though, because we haven't had any kind of opportunity for exchange or discussion.

I want to talk a little bit about an area of significant concern on the part of members of our caucus and of my leader, Howard Hampton — we will be moving an amendment to this effect tonight — and that is with respect to First Nations. I know last week when Howard mentioned, when asked by the media, that he had some concerns about the bill, there was a flurry of faxes that came in. I have to say to people that sometimes it would be good to pick up the phone and ask, because I want to tell you what led to that expression of concern. I think it's something we should all be concerned about in the province.

Let me read to you from a letter from James Morris, who's the deputy grand chief of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation.

"As you are aware, the First Nations child welfare agencies were not adequately consulted; therefore it is inaccurate for the minister to state extensive consultations were conducted." Once again First Nations were left out of the process, and they have a right to be angry. They have a right to feel that they have been overlooked yet again.

"The aboriginal representatives who attended a four-hour session in Thunder Bay, Ontario, to discuss legislative changes is totally inadequate. While it may be accurate to say that stakeholders in urban settings agree this is good legislation and provide overwhelming support for the bill since introduction, this is not the case for First Nations agencies. Furthermore, First Nations agencies did not have the opportunity to provide feedback to the government prior to introducing the bill.

"The new child welfare reform will adversely impact on First Nations agencies" — I think this is the crux of it, and this is what I hope the government will listen to in terms of the recommendation that we bring forward in an amendment — "as the new system is not aboriginal-specific and will be very difficult to integrate. The model promotes a social work perspective of the urban family but does not take into account aboriginal community interrelationships, extended family, social conditions, remoteness, on-reserve poverty, peer relationships etc which occur in First Nations."

I don't think the minister would actually dispute that. I think that's true. What the minister would suggest is that the provisions within the bill that talk about cultural sensitivity, which are in the existing act, remain, that they're not changed by the new bill.

We're hoping that, given the minister understands the importance of paramount interest — because, in fact, one of the very first amendments is to bring the rights of the child to be paramount over all other considerations. It doesn't take away the importance to consider what is proper for the family and the importance of trying to keep a family unit together and a whole range of other issues, but it says, push come to shove, if you've got to make a decision, what is paramount is the right of the child. I think we all agree with that, with all of the caveats that I put in place about the need for the better supports for positive parenting and prevention and intervention.

But when it comes to First Nations, the section on cultural sensitivity finds itself lower down in the bill, in paragraph 5 or so. We would like to suggest —

Hon Mrs Ecker: A whole bunch of sections.

Ms Lankin: Minister, you don't need to heckle. You could just listen for a second and see whether there's any merit in even giving consideration. I know at the last minute you just need to get it done, but maybe, given that you've spent so much time refusing to listen, you could for a moment tonight listen and see whether you could give any consideration to this.

We're going to propose that paragraph 5 of subsection 1(2) — and that is the section that currently is the leading section in dealing with cultural sensitivity dealing with First Nations — be dropped and that a new subsection be

added further up in the beginning of the bill where we talk about the paramount issue of children's rights; that following that we add a subsection (1.1) and that it read:

"It is a purpose of this act, so long as it is consistent with the best interests, protection and well being of children," which is the language the minister uses in the legislation, "to recognize that Indian and native people are entitled to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services, and that all services to Indian and native children and families should be provided in a manner that recognizes their culture, heritage and traditions and the concept of the extended family."

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I say to the minister, it does not take away from the current provisions of the legislation. What it attempts to do, in language that the minister seems content with, because there aren't proposed changes to that, melded with the language that makes paramount the right of children and the best interests of children, is to elevate the concern of First Nations, to bring it to the beginning of the legislation and to say that where the purpose is consistent with the best interests of the child, it is also paramount to consider the cultural sensitivities of First Nations and their ability to continue to deliver their own services where that has been established.

I hope the minister, over the period of the next half-hour or 45 minutes or so before we get into committee of the whole, will give some consideration to passing that amendment. The only letters that have come in from First Nations across the province have been letters condemning the lack of consultation and asking for, on a nation-to-nation basis, those consultations to take place and asking for the legislation to reflect the real and differing nature and issue of concern, particularly in dealing with remote and on-reserve native communities.

Mr Gerretsen: You could do that, Janet.

Hon Mrs Ecker: It's already in there.

Ms Lankin: The minister is already dismissing me, saying, "It's already in there." As I've said in my debate, it is in there in paragraph 5, and I'm suggesting to you that paragraph 5 could be moved up to subsection (1.1) and in a very clear and a very strong and a very forthright fashion make it clear that this Legislature of Ontario understands First Nations' concerns and understands that those concerns are born of a history of experience. It is a history of experience of how our agencies, modelled on our culture and our family values, have interacted with their communities and have brought about in some circumstances some disastrous results.

None of us and none of the agencies, the children's aid societies, would support a return to some of the horrible events of the past, where we saw First Nations children removed from their homes, removed from reserves, taken away from their extended families and their cultural base. None of us would support that. But how is it that we come to a place in time where we are in one evening pushing through legislation and we have not adequately consulted, yet again, with First Nations? How is it that we continue to believe that we know what is best, we continue to be able to sit there and say, "It's OK,

it doesn't affect them; it's already there in the act," when every one of the representations that have come from First Nations — and you heard a couple of them read here tonight — has said very clearly that the minister did not consult adequately and that their concerns are not addressed; and in fact the more interventionist nature of this legislation, which most of us in this House absolutely support, which is based on the recommendations of the coroners' inquests and based on the expert panel, is not appropriately applicable to their society, to their culture, to their children?

Why can't we listen to that? Why can't we take steps? Even though we're doing it in a very condensed way, why can't we take the steps to give expression to their desire to continue in their own way to provide for the protection of their children? I hope we will be able to do that tonight.

I began by reading the names of some very, very precious children who died at the hands of their caregivers or their loved ones or their parents. I end by saying to all of us that the work that has been done, the very painful work that has been done by those who reviewed the circumstances leading up to those tragic deaths, the painful expression of that which we heard — I think often of the coroner's jury in Shanay Johnson's death, the painful expression of that — and the recommendations are in part addressed through amendments in this legislation tonight.

On balance, I support the passage of this legislation, but I hope that comments we have been able to put on the record tonight, comments about the inadequate discussion and debate of certain legal thresholds, of what the intent of the Legislature was, won't prejudice appropriate determination of that down the road by the system, by the courts, by judges. Comments have been put on the record with respect to the need for adequate funding, not simply for the increased caseload and the increased time with which to deal with the caseload through the new risk assessment but for prevention measures as well, the need for children's aid societies to find out what their budgets are, which we still don't know, and what the funding formula really means, which we still don't know, but those are corollaries to making this legislation work.

I hope we understand that the necessary supports in our communities, those supports which had been cut in so many areas — children's treatment centres, children's mental health, child care, early childhood education opportunities — all of those intervention and prevention programs, are necessary to make legislation like this meaningful and work, to make legislation like this the tool that all of us want it to truly be, the tool that gives highly skilled child protection workers who have appropriate caseloads the means with which to go in and do what they want to do every day, what they do best, which is protect children and try to ensure that no other child meets the fate of the children whose names I read out here tonight.

The remaining time I will leave for other members of my caucus who want to participate. I appreciate having had the opportunity. I say again, I think it is shameful that

there wasn't the appropriate process and the opportunity to hear from the public. I hope that after passage of this bill and some experience, long before the five-year review period is up, we will come back together as legislators and give this public policy the kind of hearing, and have the discussion with those in the field, that I believe is warranted.

Mr Frank Klees (York-Mackenzie): I'm pleased to participate in this debate. I'm sure all members of the Legislature would prefer that we not have to debate this subject at all. It's unfortunate that in our society today we do have to deal with the reality of abuse. It's unfortunate that there's even a need for children's aid societies within our communities, but that is the reality. As legislators, we have a responsibility to do the best we can to protect the most vulnerable in our society. I know we all share that common objective.

I'd like to begin my remarks by quoting from a letter that was addressed to the Honourable Howard Hampton by the children's aid society of the county of Simcoe, signed by Mr George Leck, the executive director. It reads as follows:

"As you are aware, Bill 73, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act in order to better promote the best interests, protection and well being of children, is being introduced to the Legislature in the spring session. We cannot sufficiently underscore the importance of the passage of this bill to Ontario's most vulnerable children.

"The government has sought extensive feedback from children's aid societies, youth and the public prior to introducing the bill. The amendment in the legislation allows for further amendments within a five-year review period, which will allow for any other revisions that may be necessary. Other components of the government's child welfare reform agenda such as the risk assessment model, child welfare information system and the new funding framework will not effectively protect children without these amendments to the legislation.

"The Simcoe County Children's Aid Society fully supports the proposed legislative amendments. The Child and Family Services Act is the major tool used by CASs to protect children. The proposed amendments will help us to keep children safe.

"Thank you for supporting the safety and protection of Ontario's most vulnerable children by ensuring the expeditious passage of Bill 73."

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I read that because I think it encapsulates succinctly what this Legislature is attempting to do. It refers to the fact that there has been extensive consultation. It's interesting that we have now spent about an hour and a half, perhaps more than that, in this Legislature, a great opportunity for members opposite to provide positive, constructive proposals in terms of the ongoing implementation of this legislation, and yet what we heard most was more questions about why we didn't have more opportunity to discuss this.

I don't know what the members opposite have been doing for the last four years, the last eight years, the last 16 years. Most of those who spoke today were in this place. What were they doing, if not discussing the important implications of this act? Where were they? Where were you while the initial proposal was made? Where were you in the course of all the discussions? I don't understand.

If we go to Hansard, we will see in Hansard, time and time again, valuable time wasted in this place that should be used for constructive debate by members opposite saying, "We haven't had enough time to talk about this legislation." Perhaps, in the next session of Parliament this place can actually get to discuss some of the positive aspects of legislation, rather than the continual rhetoric that does no one any good. The people in the gallery and the people who are watching at home hear what you're saying. They have not heard one positive message from you. I'm suggesting to you that it's time we get on, and that's why we're saying, "Let's get on, give the children's aid societies the tools they need to get on with the business of protecting children in this province."

The key messages around this legislation are to protect children and to put children first, but let's be clear: Putting children first does not mean putting families last. Clearly that is a balance that this Legislature has kept in mind as this bill was drafted. This was foremost in the minds of the people who were conducting the research. To say that there hasn't been consultation is certainly not being honest with the people in this province.

I'd like to address the concern of the member for Beaches-Woodbine regarding First Nations, and it's absolutely not true that First Nations were not consulted. They were. Discussions were held with First Nations. The panel of experts, in preparing their report released in June 1998, consulted with people across the province, including First Nations. The ministry —

Ms Lankin: No, it's the government —

Mr Klees: Member for Beaches-Woodbine, you're saying "the government." The ministry held two informal discussions with First Nations and aboriginal organizations to discuss options in September 1998, and since the bill was first introduced in October 1998, ministry staff have met with representatives of the designated aboriginal children's aid societies; they've met with the Association of Native Child and Family Services of Ontario and the Union of Ontario Indians to discuss the bill and other changes. There have been —

Ms Lankin: They refer to that in their letter, Frank.

Mr Klees: If they refer to that in their letter, why didn't you in your comments? Why did you allow it to remain on the record that there has been no consultation with the aboriginal peoples of this province? It's simply not true, and it doesn't help the debate.

I would also like to point out that this bill before the Legislature today will in no way amend any of the provisions in the Child and Family Services Act which deal specifically with First Nations, including the concepts of extended family, preservation of cultural values

and customary care. All those issues are in the act today; they will remain there. Those concerns of the aboriginal peoples in our province will be very much preserved. The purpose of the proposed amendments is to make it clear that the best interests of the child must come first.

I know the third party will be presenting an amendment. Again, I have to question, and I put the question to the House: What is the purpose of this amendment? Perhaps the issue is that it's in the wrong place in the act, that you'd prefer it to be in another section. That's the kind of debate, that's the kind of discussion in this place that has delayed the implementation of legislation for years. We can quibble about the cosmetics of a piece of legislation till the cows come home; What we need to do is focus on the purpose of this legislation, and that's to protect children.

The CFSA contains several provisions that recognize the unique needs and circumstances of First Nations, their children, their families and their communities. Again, as I said before, none of these provisions would be amended by this bill. The purpose section of the act, section 1, still recognizes that "Indian and native people should be entitled to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services, and that all services to Indian and native children and families should be provided in a manner that recognizes their culture, heritage and traditions and the concept of the extended family."

I go on, because I think this is critical. It is very important that the people of Ontario and certainly the native peoples of this province understand that this government in no way intends to sideline or to minimize the importance of the cultural heritage of native peoples.

Subsection 37(4) of the act deals with the preservation of a child's cultural identity. Again, for the record, I quote: "Where a person is directed in this part" — the child protection part — "to make an order or determination in the best interests of a child and the child is an Indian or native person, the person shall take into consideration the importance, in recognition of the uniqueness of Indian and native culture, heritage and traditions, of preserving the child's cultural identity."

Subsection 39(1), subsection 57(4), section 58, subsection 64(6), section 69, part X — I can go on — all of these sections in the act speak specifically to First Nations and preserve the integrity of that culture and ensure with children's aid societies that as children are being considered and protected, these issues are taken care of. There is no need for us to further delay the proceedings in this House with a cosmetic amendment that does nothing more to enhance this legislation, because all of these concerns are already taken into consideration.

I'd like to address an issue that the member for Beaches-Woodbine referred to. She asks the question, why 16- and 17-year-olds, for example, are not specifically named in this act. The member opposite knows full well my history in this place. When I brought before this House a private member's bill that specifically would have allowed parental responsibility to intervene with 16- and 17-year-olds, the member opposite voted against that

bill. In fact, every member of the opposition party voted against that bill —

Interjection: Wrong, wrong.

Mr Klees: It's not wrong. Every member of the opposition, every Liberal member and every NDP member, voted against that bill —

Mr Gerretsen: And some Tories.

Mr Klees: And some Tories; that's right. I'm still working on them.

We've got another session of Parliament coming up, and every member here knows I'll be back to revisit that issue, because I do believe there are some responsibilities that we have to 16- and 17-year-olds, who unfortunately your government, the NDP government, elevated to the position of adults and gave them their own rights, and I suggest to you that that is not doing them any good, as you admitted in this debate in this House tonight.

Interjections.

Mr Klees: I would only hope that when you come back, if you come back, following the next election —
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The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Order, please. There are too many interjections. It's not allowed, and I won't tolerate it. I recognize the member.

Mr Klees: Someone once said if someone doesn't like to hear the truth, they try to drown it out.

The fact of the matter is that it's not referenced in this act because children of 16 and over are treated differently in law in this province, as the honourable member knows. Children over 16 in fact receive services under other parts of the CFSA, for example, under special-needs agreements. It's not that these children of 16 and 17 years of age are not dealt with under the CFSA; they are.

Can it be improved? I for one, as the Speaker knows, as other members of this Legislature know, believe we could improve that. To my constituents and to the many people in Ontario who I believe agree with me on that point, we will be back to revisit that.

With regard to the issue that was made as well about the funding formula, I think it's important for the record that we make sure people in Ontario understand that, contrary to what's being said by the opposition, this government has in fact substantially increased the framework of support for children's aid in this province: additional funding of \$170 million over three years to children's aid societies, supported by the funding framework. Those funds are being used to hire child protection staff, improve training and revitalize foster care. This is on top of the additional \$15 million that was invested in 1997-98 for more staff, additional training and to support the new database.

In addition to that, when we talk about resources, I agree that simply creating another law is not enough. If creating laws were sufficient to protect children, we wouldn't have a child in danger in this province, because there are lots of laws. The fact of the matter is, is it effective law? Because we do need that. Children's aid workers have been telling us for years in this province that they need more effective legislation that will

empower them to do the work they want to do, need to do.

I'm so surprised at the member for Beaches-Woodbine, who now begins to take exception with the fact that we are opening up the framework and the scope of the kind of initiative that children's aid workers can take in this province, feeling it's too broad, feeling it's not narrow enough. That's the very reason we're here, because we believe that the people on the front lines in this province need the tools to step in when there is the potential of a child being in danger. That's their job.

With regard to additional supports, Speaker, you know that new, permanent front-line child protection staff and supervisors are in the process of being hired. Societies were able to hire 237 additional permanent front-line workers in 1998-99 and 220 in 1997-98. Funding over the next two years will allow societies to hire at least 523 more child protection staff. We understand that the law is not enough, but what we need is effective front-line workers who will take the training that is being given them, who will take the assessment tools that are being made available to them and apply them sensitively and professionally to protect children in this province. We believe we are well on our way to improving the state of the conditions for children in this province.

In addition to those resources, the member opposite will also know that we have increased rates for foster care parents. The minimum basic rates were increased from \$14 to \$25.71, retroactive to October 1998.

It's one thing to say, "You're not providing the support services." As the minister said earlier, "Please inform yourself." Let's deal realistically. Let's deal on a level of intellectual honesty with members in this House and, more important, with the people in this province who rely on the legislators in this place to debate the issues truthfully and factually.

Interjection.

Mr Klees: The member from Kingston howls at that. You can howl all you want. The fact of the matter is that the kind of rhetoric that goes on over there on those benches does nothing at all to communicate the truth and the facts about legislation before this House.

I believe the electorate sees through that. I can tell you that what I am hearing on the street is that people in this province are sick and tired of that kind of partisan debate. What they are looking for is principled leadership that will deal with the issues in the best interests of children, of seniors and of adults in this province, because they're simply saying: "Get on with managing the province. Do the right thing because it's the right thing to do. Put aside that partisan quibble you have and all of that yelping that goes on over there."

Yelping will get you nowhere but on to the opposition benches where you belong, and there'll be fewer of you there after the election.

Mr Gerretsen: Jealousy will get you nowhere. Arrogant, that's what you are.

Mr Klees: It has been four years in this House. The member says "arrogance." This is not about arrogance. I

am giving you feedback of what I am hearing from people in my riding and as I have travelled the province in my capacity as parliamentary assistant.

People across the province are saying to me, "I may not agree with everything you've done, and maybe sometimes I feel you've gone a bit fast and maybe you could have done it differently, but you know what I respect?" I'm being told that what people respect is the fact that this government has done what it said it would do. It has delivered on its commitments to the people in this province.

It has also been intellectually honest with people, because when in 1995 we set out an agenda for the people of this province, we can today go back and look at that agenda and see where on every point we have delivered what we committed to deliver to the people of this province. We are not subjecting ourselves to simply reacting and responding to every special interest group that comes along. Just because someone makes noise about a particular piece of legislation is no reason to delay the intent, the good things that legislation would do, because what we have to do is ask ourselves, first of all: "Is it morally right? Is it intellectually right? Is it timely for us to move forward?"

The people in the galleries today are saying to us, "Move forward." It may not be a perfect piece of legislation. I have yet to see one. But do you know what? We're doing it because we believe it's the right thing to do for children in this province. We're doing it because we believe it's the right thing for front-line workers who care deeply about the children and the families they serve. We're doing it because other governments in the past have failed to do it. For other governments, for other members who have sat in those seats for years now to say, "You're doing it all wrong," I think sounds very hollow.

What we need to do now is move forward with this. As this letter from the children's aid society said, this is a piece of legislation that is open to discussion, that is open to review. We are happy to hear from people on the front lines who will say: "Look, here is how we can do it better. Here's something we can do in the implementation that will improve matters for children."

We're willing to listen, and we will also be willing to act on that, but in the meantime, the longer we delay, the more risk we allow to remain in the faces of children in this province. We're not prepared to do that.

I conclude my remarks by saying again that, as a father, I think it's unfortunate that we as members of the Legislature should even have to debate this kind of legislation in this House.

Our problems are much deeper than a data processing system. Our problems in this society of ours are much deeper than simply the tools that are being provided in this legislation. I think that over the number of days and months to come what we need to be debating much more is not necessarily how we deal with the symptoms of child abuse but what we can do in this province to get at

the heart, at the root of child abuse. Until we get there as legislators, we still have not done our job.

2030

Mrs Lyn McLeod (Fort William): I guess I am one of the very few members of the Legislature who has an opportunity to speak twice to this bill. As all members will know, we have committed ourselves not only to supporting the bill but to the agreement to have the bill passed this evening so that it can become law in the event there should be a dissolution of this session of the Legislature.

I'm not going to reiterate all the concerns we have in this caucus about the process and the fact that legislation of this import is once again going to be passed without an opportunity to debate the very significant issues that have been raised by members of both opposition parties, concerns which would not have precluded our supporting the bill in the interests of children's safety but which deserved some public debate.

I note that the member who has just finished speaking suggests there should have been an opportunity on the part of the opposition to offer — I've written the words down — positive, constructive suggestions for change. We would have welcomed that opportunity.

But in fact there wasn't even much time for the rhetoric he suggests, or the time-wasting he suggests has actually gone on, because this bill was originally presented for second reading debate on November 5 for an evening — without notice, by the way. It was subsequently called for debate again on December 3 and December 17, at which point, as you will recall, the House was dismissed and did not resume again until two weeks ago. This is the only opportunity we have had to debate this bill on its reintroduction.

There has hardly been time or opportunity to put forward positive, constructive suggestions for change, and those suggestions that have been put forward are not even going to get consideration this evening.

The primary concern we have raised throughout — I am not going to take time, I don't have time, to get into the details of the concerns that have been raised — is that while all of us are in agreement that we must take legislative action to act on the recommendations of the inquests and to ensure that child protection and child safety is always foremost in terms of the actions of the children's aid societies that are mandated to protect children, we are concerned that there can well be, perhaps almost inevitably, a pendulum swing so that there could be error on the side of apprehension in order to be sure we are providing the protection children need.

That swing may well occur not because it has been made legally possible and in so many instances absolutely necessary to apprehend children for their safety but because it will be necessary more often to resort to apprehension because there have not been resources provided at an earlier stage to do the prevention that would allow that child to stay safely within the child's family.

I think it is still fair to say that children's aid societies barely have enough resources to deal with their current legal mandate and the constantly increasing demands to respond to crisis situations and that there is no real indication that the government, in bringing this legislation forward for passage, is going to ensure they will have the additional resources they need to carry out their expanded legal mandate.

I certainly don't see the resources for prevention being put into the hands of children's aid societies. I do not see those resources being put into the hands of other community agencies that are serving children and whose work might well work alongside the children's aid societies to ensure that there are healthy family settings in which children can grow.

Because of that, I am going to use the few minutes I have left to make some further comments about the legislation and our concern for the well-being of children and to talk a little bit about children and children's needs and how well this government is meeting those needs.

If the members opposite feel that's a waste of time, so be it. I happen to think part of our responsibilities is to call a spade a spade when the government wants to exercise its rhetoric and its political opportunism to trumpet what it has done for children, and when the record of four years speaks so clearly to the opposite reality.

One of the concerns we have raised recently in the Legislature — and raised because we have had public statements made by family and children's centres which are providing counselling for children and families, the kind of counselling that makes it possible for troubled children and troubled families to find ways of resolving their difficulties. Those agencies have come forward and said they need an immediate investment of \$120 million just to be able to deal with their current waiting lists.

I've had frequent opportunities to sit down with the regional children's centre in my home riding. I know the kinds of waiting lists and the way in which those waiting lists have grown over the last two years because of funding cuts and because of the kind of pressures which other cuts have put on families in this province since the Mike Harris government came into office.

Those agencies came forward and said, "We need a \$120-million immediate investment just to deal with the crisis situation we are facing now." There has been no response from this government at all, no response to even begin to repair the damage they did to these agencies when they first came into office and made the agencies — and the children and families they serve — some of the individuals that had to pay the price for the cost-cutting that went on to fund that tax cut.

I think of the family situation that we raised in the Legislature today where a woman in Thunder Bay who has been valiantly trying to provide care for her multi-disabled child at home is now facing a situation where on Thursday of this week she will be asking the children's aid society to come and take that child. One of the things that has pushed her to the brink of what for her is a truly

desperate, truly tragic action is the fact that a newly privatized health care provider that provides the home care that this child needs, and was providing that care in the school setting, has decided that they can no longer provide the kind of support that would allow the child to be cared for in a school setting.

Therefore, the mother will have to leave her job to care for this child at home once again even though the history of this family, as the Minister of Community and Social Services well knows, has been to try and do everything possible in the past to provide that care at home. The mother has had no support at all from the ministry or the Minister of Community and Social Services to be able to ensure that this multi-disabled child can be cared for safely in a setting.

I heard the minister responsible for children's services speak with some pride about the creation of a minister responsible for the children, somebody who can be an advocate for children, but I don't see this government having done nearly enough to even repair the harm they have done over the past four years.

Incidentally, the minister — and I want to point this out because it's certainly rhetoric indeed when the minister responsible to be an advocate for children feels that it's necessary, rather than just talk about the government's record on services for children, to get into a direct personal attack on other members of the House — suggested that my colleague the critic for community and social services hadn't adequately done her research.

I would suggest that the minister herself, with her responsibility for children's services and her need to trumpet what the government has done, might also want to get her facts straight. It seems that she was so anxious to ally herself for political reasons with the New Democratic Party that she neglected to remember that the Better Beginnings, Better Futures program, which we all think is a good program for children and families, was introduced by a previous Minister of Community and Social Services, Mr Charles Beer, who happened to be a Liberal cabinet minister at the time, not a New Democrat.

I believe that most of this government's concern for children is a somewhat recent conversion on the road to Damascus or perhaps, shall we say, on the eve of a writ of an election. I look at what this government has done for children, particularly the early years. I'll just deal with that because I have only a couple more minutes. I look at what they've done for junior kindergarten. The minister responsible for children has talked a lot tonight not about the legislation but about the Mustard-McCain report, which is one of the road-to-Damascus publications that the government has welcomed in the last couple of weeks and indicated support for. I look at the recommendations here on the funding of junior kindergarten, and the importance of junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten programs.

It reminds me of the fact that one of this government's first actions was to cut the grants for junior kindergarten programs in half, so that when this government talks about the full funding of junior kindergarten, they're

talking about funding it at half the rate it used to be funded at, so that our junior kindergarten classes are now staffed at the level of 25 students to one teacher. I don't believe that Dr Mustard or Margaret McCain, with their genuine concern for the importance of learning in the early years, could ever subscribe to funding at the level of 25 young students to one teacher as being full funding of programs for the early years.

2040

I also remember well that when the funding formula came out and the government took over total control of funding for education, they had a program in there that was called The Early Years: The Learning Alternative — that's not quite the exact name — but I also know that was sort of the hallmark of their funding for the early years. When I looked at all the places where they had taken funding out that would support children in the early grades — and I'm not even including the cuts to junior kindergarten that had already taken place — there was a net loss of \$90 million in funding that would support children's learning in the early years.

This year the grants that were announced for school boards, just about three weeks ago now, had another \$66-million reduction in the early learning grant that would support learning for children in the early years. I don't think that exactly qualifies as support for the recommendations in the Mustard-McCain report.

The last situation that I want to raise in terms of what this government's actions are doing to children in the early years comes back — and I'll be very quick because I want to save time for my colleague to speak — to a specific program which is referenced in the Early Years Study as one of the model programs that all of us who are concerned about children and families would like to see implemented much more widely. It's called the Roots of Empathy program.

As the Early Years Study notes, it was "developed by the parenting and family literacy centres in Toronto inner-city schools, is slated to be replicated nationally and internationally," and they put in brackets "and hopefully provincially!" They don't appear to have quite as much confidence in this government as the government thinks they do. It talks about the way in which the program "brings an infant and mother from the community (who are in the parenting program) into elementary school classrooms monthly so that children can see and learn how a baby develops and what a baby needs in order to prepare the next generation for parenting."

That's a small part of what that program does; it's a small part of what the family and parenting centres developed in Toronto some 15 years ago by Mary Gordon are actually doing. Mary Gordon is an internationally recognized expert in providing —

Hon Mrs Marland: She was on the reference group.

Mrs McLeod: On the reference group, exactly as the minister says. That's why it's so important that I take time to bring this back to your attention, Minister, because Mary Gordon, who is an internationally recognized expert in doing exactly what the early years report

recommends; who has been called down by Colorado to look at the extension of the work that she's doing, which is to look at what happens to children who are in a bullied situation at schools, has had to come and talk to people like opposition members and trustees to say, "My programs are threatened with closure." Threatened not because of the minister responsible for children, who I'm sure would be horrified to think that a program like this, which is what the Early Years Study so much wants to see replicated, is threatened by the Minister of Education, her colleague.

What happens to advocacy for children when a program that is being recognized as groundbreaking and important is threatened with closure because the funding formula of her colleague in government, the Minister of Education, does not provide the continuing education dollars that would allow programs, for example, that are reaching out to young prostitutes on the streets of Toronto who have young children and have those young prostitutes involved in parenting programs?

They're not going to be funded any longer because they were funded under continuing education dollars which are no longer there. The after-school programs aren't going to be able to run because schools aren't being funded to run any kind of community after-4 programs; they're not getting the maintenance money from the Minister of Education. It's going to be just like other programs, just like Veronica Manuel whose case we raised this afternoon, where everybody says somebody else's ministry is responsible and yet a child falls through the cracks because nobody is actually prepared to take responsibility.

I quite frankly believe that the ministry of children's services in this government is simply a cover so that you can create the impression of being concerned about children while the line ministries that actually provide the financing and the resources, and should take the responsibility, fail children and families time and time again.

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): I have some comments to make on this legislation, but first of all I want to respond to some of the comments that were made from across the floor: insinuations that opposition members don't know what they're talking about, that opposition members are dealing with cosmetic issues only.

I want to read a submission from Tikinagan Child and Family Services that was made to Comsoc and let the public judge who around here is dealing with trivial issues. Tikinagan is a child and family service organization that deals with 31 fly-in communities. Many of these are poor communities. Many of them have difficult issues to overcome in terms of unemployment and social development. In fact, in their submission they point out:

"Tikinagan functions in a unique environment that includes numerous remote communities' extreme social problems. The children in these communities sometimes live in Third World conditions. Rates of poverty, family violence, alcohol abuse, suicide, gas sniffing and other

social problems are multiplied far above provincial averages. Virtually all children in these communities are at risk, using the Ontario risk assessment criteria."

I guess this is what the member refers to as "trivia," that somehow the work that's done by this child and family service organization isn't worthy of debate or discussion in this Legislature. This organization raised a number of issues back in January and I'll go through them.

Recommendation: The ministry acknowledged that the risk assessment model has not been fully implemented at Tikinagan; that the ministry commit to working in close partnership with Tikinagan to ensure that all of the child welfare reform initiatives are developed in ways that are appropriate within Tikinagan's unique and challenging context; that a working group be established including the ministry, Tikinagan and the native association, with a mandate to study and make recommendations on modifying the child welfare reform initiatives in order to be implemented within this unique and challenging environment; that a time-limited project be conducted to redesign and modify the child welfare reform initiatives — eg, a 12-month project with a full-time project coordinator and translator.

I guess this member would have us believe that all this has been done, that you've complied with these requests from the aboriginal child and family service agencies, who have one of the toughest jobs in the province. You haven't done anything.

Mr Klees: You obviously didn't hear what I said, Howard.

Mr Hampton: You, sir, engage in rhetoric. You know nothing about what you talk about.

Here I have a letter from Weechi-it-te-win, dated April 29, 1999, another child and family service agency. If this member spoke any truth at all, I wouldn't have this letter. But what does this letter say? It says:

"This letter is to convey to you our concern about proposed changes in the Ontario Child and Family Services Act and its current interpretation by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.

Then it goes on to say, "The ministry's current initiatives on changes in the act and funding formula threaten our achievements." Again, a child and family service agency that does some of the most difficult work in this province, and this member refers to it as "cosmetic," not worthy of debate or discussion or consideration. You're showing the true colours, the true integrity of your government, sir.

The Deputy Speaker: Order. I would ask the member to direct his comments through me, please.

Mr Hampton: "In the first place, the ministry's current focus on child protection, singling out the child from the context of the family, threatens our custom and our method, and hence the result of our services. Our custom is to address the needs of children through the concentric circles of the immediately family, the extended family and the community. Our own expression for this custom is: 'It takes a community to raise a child.' We

use these unique strengths of family and community relationships to protect, nurture and develop our children when the immediate family is unable to do so. Members of the extended family or other members of the community provide care and support with the consent of the child's parent(s) in our method of customary care."

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They point out that this is at risk because this government hasn't consulted, hasn't addressed the real issues of these native child and family service agencies that do some of the most difficult work in the province. This is a letter dated a couple of days ago, pointing out that what this government is about here tonight is nothing but rhetoric. The concerns of these aboriginal child and family service agencies haven't been addressed. The concerns with the funding formula haven't been addressed. The concerns with the framework haven't been addressed. What the people of Ontario are hearing from this government is a snow job, designed to be able to go out there and trumpet on the eve of the election campaign, "We introduced amendments to the Child and Family Services Act," but don't reflect on the fact that some of the most needy children in this province are totally left out of the framework. In fact, the government's new framework will do damage to the very child and family service agencies that work so hard to try to help those children, to try to protect them. This is what they say:

"In the second place, the ministry's new funding formula views all children's aid societies in the same way and threatens our practice of customary care. For example, the ministry proposes to fund ongoing support of a child in care based on an allocation of four hours per month for a child placed under a voluntary arrangement versus five hours per month under a court order. Clearly, the ministry will see our customary care arrangements as voluntary since we work hard to achieve consensus within the family and the community to the plan of care for a child; however, the ministry will not recognize the exceptional effort it takes to establish and maintain this consensus on care. Ironically, we could save time (and money under this funding formula) by simply going to court and having a judge consent to the plan of care, except that this is contrary to our custom and, from hard experience, we know it is likely to damage the child and the family. In all, the ministry has no fault with the outcome of our community care services, yet seems bent on destroying their very fabric."

This is from a native child and family service agency, a letter written on April 29, pointing out that despite their efforts to try to get this government to understand their difficult challenges, despite their efforts to try to get this government to respond, that in fact there hasn't been a response. These are powerful words: "In all, the ministry has no fault with the outcome of our community care services, yet seems bent on destroying their very fabric." That's where we are.

What I've tried to do is to present an amendment that hopefully would bring some flexibility to this legislation

so that those native child and family service agencies that have some of the most difficult tasks, that face up to some of the most difficult challenges under the most difficult economic and social circumstances, would have the flexibility they need to be able to do their job.

This is what they say in the conclusion of their letter:

"We need to replace the rhetoric on customary care and the arguments about method with a contract for services rendered and service results, and allow aboriginal agencies to direct their own program development under their respective mandates from the First Nations they represent."

That's what they're asking. I don't see it anywhere in this act. I don't see any of the flexibility that would be needed. I've asked about the funding framework. I'm told that the funding framework is quite inflexible, that it will not provide aboriginal child and family service agencies with the kind of funding they need to fund their very unique programs; that it's either all according to this government's funding model or you're out of luck. Thus the statement that the ministry "seems bent on destroying" the very fabric of the successes that these agencies have been able to create and build up over a period of 15 years. That's why I'll be putting the amendment.

If government members think this is a cosmetic amendment, if you think it's cosmetic to want to build that kind of flexibility in, then we really are in a sorry state with regard to this legislation.

Mr Gerretsen: In the few minutes that I have left, I want to continue with what has just been stated by a number of previous speakers. The minister basically says that the reason why this particular section doesn't need to be placed on its own is that it's already in the act. That's really the only reason that she's given. What I can't understand and what I am sure the people of Ontario can't understand is that if it is such a minor thing to the minister, why doesn't she just go along with the change that has been suggested?

That brings me back to the earlier point made by the member for York-Mackenzie. I always get very leery when people say this kind of stuff, because there have been enough disputes in the world over the last couple of centuries, certainly during this century, to deal with these kinds of issues. He said, "The truth is on our side, and there's none on the other side." That is a very dangerous comment to make, particularly in legislation of this nature. Surely to goodness we can accept, whether in government or in opposition, the idea that maybe you get the best legislation by listening to the other person's viewpoint and the suggestions they make with respect to that legislation. Who knows? It may turn out in the end to be better legislation.

Mr Klees: Tell us.

Mr Gerretsen: Well, why don't you pass this amendment? If it doesn't mean anything to you and it means so much to these various organizations, then go along with the amendment.

Mr Klees: What are your ideas? Have you got any? Give us a proposal, John.

Mr Gerretsen: Of course, he likes to deflect. He also says, "What the people are really interested in how a government manages the province." There are an awful lot of people out there who think you've made a mess of things. How else do you explain the fact that the minister here says, "We're going to have 500 new workers within CAS," and then later on she says 1,000 — how do you justify that with her earlier act of actually cutting \$17 million out of the CAS budgets, which happened a couple of years ago? Has the world changed so much that all of a sudden we can go from a situation where the CASs didn't need \$17 million worth of resources to a state where 1,000 new workers in the area is a good thing? I doubt that very much.

As the member for Port Arthur mentioned earlier, what about the junior kindergarten funding? One of the very first committees I was on travelled the province. We went to city after city and town after town in this province, and every group that came before us said: "Government, you're doing the wrong thing. Do not cut the junior kindergarten funding. For every dollar you spend at a young age, you'll save \$7 or \$8 in social costs at a later age." Every one of the government members totally disagreed and totally dismissed any suggestion made by any group or by members of the opposition that maybe they were doing the wrong thing. Now, all of a sudden, junior kindergarten funding is back again.

How about in the areas of hospital care? Ten thousand nurses were fired in this province, just within the last couple of years. They'll say, "We didn't fire them; the hospitals fired them." Well, the hospitals fired them because you didn't give them enough money to adequately resource the health care workers and the nursing components of hospitals. Now you're hiring them back again, or a new group of nurses. The world doesn't change that quickly.

To my way of thinking, those are examples of the kinds of things this government has been guilty of right from day one. They have not managed the system well. They have not managed the system of child services or the health services.

What I fear more than anything is when someone is so driven by ideology that they can't see the possibility that maybe the views of another person may just add something to solving a problem. That is the feeling of a lot of people out there. A lot of people feel that this government has been so ideologically driven that it simply didn't want to listen to anybody else.

2100

I find it very interesting. I've got a letter here from the developmental consulting program at Queen's University, a letter written just a couple of weeks ago, in which Philip Burge and Joseph White clearly state: "Our purpose for this meeting would be to outline our concerns that Bill 73 does not amend the Child and Family Services Act adequately. Specifically, we believe that an additional amendment is crucial. There needs to be a

clause stating that foster children, once adults, have a right to receive identifying information about their birth parents and immediate family members and extended families." That issue hasn't been addressed in this legislation either, or hasn't been addressed by the minister in any way, shape or form.

So before we start throwing accusations at the opposition that the government has the truth on every issue it presents, maybe it would be wise for all of us to listen to one another and end up with legislation that really and truly is not Tory legislation, or not Liberal legislation, or not New Democratic Party legislation, but is really and truly the best legislation for the people of Ontario because that is really what it's all about in the long run.

The Deputy Speaker: Mrs Ecker has moved second reading of Bill 6. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? It is carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House made earlier this evening, the bill is ordered referred to the committee of the whole House.

Hon Mr Sterling: Mr Speaker, before you dissolve into the committee of the whole House, I'd like to seek unanimous consent to amend the order the House passed earlier this evening with respect to Bill 6. Could I have unanimous consent to move that motion without notice? I want to extend the time a little bit.

The Deputy Speaker: Agreed? It is agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move that this House be authorized to sit until 9:45 pm this evening.

The Deputy Speaker: Is it the wish of the House? Is there consent? It is agreed.

House in committee of the whole.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AMENDMENT ACT (CHILD WELFARE REFORM), 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE ET À LA FAMILLE (RÉFORME DU BIEN-ÊTRE DE L'ENFANCE)

Consideration of Bill 6, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act in order to better promote the best interests, protection and well being of children / Projet de loi 6, Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la famille afin de mieux promouvoir l'intérêt véritable de l'enfant, sa protection et son bien-être.

The Chair (Mr Bert Johnson): Are there any amendments to this bill, and if so, to which sections?

Mr Howard Hampton (Rainy River): Mr Chair, to section 1, and I have two amendments to section 1.

The Chair: Section 1: questions, comments or amendments?

Mr Hampton: I have two amendments. The first one is to section 1 of the bill, subsection 1(2) of the Child and Family Services Act.

The Chair: Let's move them one at a time.

Mr Hampton: I move that paragraph 5 of subsection 1(2) of the Child and Family Services Act, as set out in section 1 of the bill, be struck out.

Then there is another amendment which goes along with that, Chair.

The Chair: We'll deal with them one at a time. Comments or questions?

Mr Hampton: Chair, I should read the second amendment because it lends sense —

The Chair: That's part of our debate. OK.

Mr Hampton: I move that section 1 of the Child and Family Services Act, as set out in section 1 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Purpose respecting Indian and native people

"(1.1) It is a purpose of this act, so long as it is consistent with the best interests, protection and well-being of children, to recognize that Indian and native people are entitled to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services, and that all services to Indian and native children and families should be provided in a manner that recognizes their culture, heritage and traditions and the concept of the extended family."

The Chair: Comments and questions?

Mr Hampton: I want to make a number of comments on the necessity for these amendments, and to support them I want to read from a letter dated April 28, 1999, from the deputy grand chief of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation. This is a tribal organization which represents close to 50 First Nations, a tribal organization that is very familiar with the unique challenges that native child and family service organizations face. This is the text of the letter; again, remember it is April 28, 1999.

"Dear Mr Hampton:

"Re: Child and Family Services Amendment Act

"As you are aware, the First Nations child welfare agencies were not adequately consulted; therefore, it is inaccurate for the minister to state extensive consultations were conducted. The aboriginal representatives who attended a four-hour session in Thunder Bay, Ontario, to discuss legislative changes is totally inadequate. While it may be accurate to say that stakeholders in urban settings agree this is good legislation and provide overwhelming support for the bill since introduction, this is not the case for First Nations agencies. Furthermore, First Nations agencies did not have the opportunity to provide feedback to the government prior to introducing the bill.

"The new child welfare reform will adversely impact on First Nations agencies as the new system is not aboriginal-specific and will be very difficult to integrate. The model promotes a social work perspective of the urban family but does not take into account aboriginal community interrelationships, extended family, social conditions, remoteness, on-reserve poverty, peer relationships etc which occur in First Nations.

"The minister states there are issues involved with the Child and Family Services Act which need to be dealt with after the bill is passed. Given the historical record of

this government, how will the issues be dealt with, once legislation is passed?

"I would like to state clearly that NAN is not opposed to the protection of children; however, the proposed amendments to the Child and Family Services Act will have significant negative impacts on the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation children, which is unacceptable."

This, from an organization which represents over 50 First Nations in the far north, an organization which is very familiar with the kinds of challenges that aboriginal child and family service organizations must face and must deal with. They are asking that something be done before a piece of legislation which is overwhelmingly focused on the realities of urban life is then forced on to them and totally misses the point with respect to them and with respect to the challenges they face and will actually make matters worse for them. That's why I've put forward these amendments. Let me explain the structure of these amendments and why we've brought them forward.

The existing act states, "The purposes of this act are," and then it says, "(a) as a paramount objective, to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children." So it's got one paramount objective. Then it lists a number of other objectives which are subsidiary — well, they aren't paramount. If they were paramount, that's what it would say, but the other ones are not paramount.

2110

What I am suggesting is this: The amendment I have introduced would recognize the unique challenges of these child and family service organizations which work with First Nations, would recognize that their situation is different from the urban model, and by placing this in the way we want to place it, at the top of the list, we propose that this would recognize the paramountcy of the work of these aboriginal child and family service organizations. By recognizing the paramount interest, by putting it on a scale that is similar to what is recognized in 1(a) "as a paramount objective, to promote the best interests, protection and well-being of children," if we do it in that way, I believe it will give those aboriginal child and family service organizations the recognition they deserve, the recognition of their unique challenges, the recognition of the unique way they do their work.

It is my hope that will then require the ministry in their funding relationships, in their frameworks, to recognize that challenge as well and to respond to it. That is why I said:

"I move that section 1 of the Child and Family Services Act, as set out in section 1 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Purpose respecting Indian and native people

"(1.1) It is a purpose of this act, so long as it is consistent with the best interests, protection and wellbeing of children, to recognize that Indian and native people are entitled to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services, and that all services to Indian and native children and families should be provided in a

manner that recognizes their culture, heritage and traditions and the concept of the extended family.”

I simply make the argument that this will give those native child and family service organizations and the work they do the recognition, the paramountcy they will need in order to carry on business under this new act. Without that unique recognition, they simply fall under this very urban formula, this very hard-set fast formula, which doesn't recognize the unique work that they do, doesn't recognize the unique challenges that they have to deal with, and doesn't recognize the unique ways they have developed to deal with these problems.

I can't understand why the government would be opposed to this kind of amendment. I can't understand, when the only consultation the government did with these aboriginal organizations was one four-hour meeting, as set out by Deputy Grand Chief James Morris, when the issues that were raised were not responded to. I can't understand why the government would be opposed to this, when Weechi-it-te-win points out in their letter of April 29, 1999:

“This letter is to convey to you our concern about proposed changes in the Ontario Child and Family Services Act and its current interpretation by the Ministry of Community and Social Services.... [T]he ministry's current initiatives on changes in the act and funding formula threaten our achievements. The issue now is to ensure that our community care services are preserved and their continuing development by our First Nations is supported.”

Then it points out in detail, “In the first place, the ministry's current focus on child protection, singling out the child from the context of the family, threatens our custom and our method, and hence the result of our services.”

Then, as they point out, “In all, the ministry has no fault with the outcome of our community care services, yet seems bent on destroying their very fabric,” and “...the ministry's new funding formula views all children's aid societies in the same way and threatens our practice of customary care.”

All I'm asking here is that the recognition that First Nations have asked for, the recognition of their unique challenges, the recognition of their unique way of conducting their work, the recognition of the successes they have achieved, be recognized by this amendment. Those are my comments for now. Hopefully we'll get some action from the government.

Hon Mrs Ecker: I appreciate the honourable member's concern about this issue, but with all due respect, the current wording does provide flexibility in the amendments that we have put forward to the Child and Family Services Act. I think what is more important is that First Nations are indeed recognized many times, in many clauses, in the current Child and Family Services Act. We are doing nothing in the changes we are bringing forward today that would diminish or alter their authority and their cultural recognition that is in this legislation.

Not only is it in the purpose section of the act, section 1, that still recognizes “that Indian and native people should be entitled to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services, and that all services to Indian and native children and families should be provided in a manner that recognizes their culture, heritage and traditions and the concept of the extended family,” but subsection 37(4) talks about, “Where a person is directed in this part to make an order or determination in the best interests of a child and the child is an Indian or native person, the person shall take into consideration the importance, in recognition of the uniqueness of Indian and native culture, heritage and traditions, of preserving the child's cultural identity.”

Subsection 39 of the act, “Where the child is an Indian or a native person, a representative chosen by the child's band or native community” is a party to a child's protection proceeding.

Subsection 57(5) provides that “Where the child...is an Indian or native person,” and the act decides that it is necessary to remove the child from the care of the family, “unless there is a substantial reason for placing the child elsewhere, the court shall place the child with (a) a member of the child's extended family; (b) a member of the child's band or native community; or (c) another Indian or native family.”

Section 58 provides that where the child is an Indian or a native person, and has been made a crown ward, a representative chosen by the child's band or native community may apply to the court at any time for an access order. I could go on. There's section 64, section 69, part VII, part X. There are references all the way through this legislation that recognize very clearly the uniqueness, the cultural sensitivity that is required for First Nations. Indeed, that's one of the reasons that we have five separate child welfare agencies that are run by First Nations so that they can take care of children from their own community.

The other point is that the expert panel was very clear in their advice, and I would like to point that there has been considerable consultation. There have been several meetings with staff, through the expert panel, with representatives of First Nations, as there should be, as we consulted on this legislation quite extensively. One of the things the expert panel was very clear on was that there had to be a paramount purpose, the best interests of the child, and that one of the problems with the legislation was that if you try and set up all different competing purposes, you get into the kind of confusion that has been flagged by coroners' inquests across the province. We have been very clear about the paramount purpose. We are continuing to recognize, however, all the way through the legislation, the uniqueness of First Nations, their need for flexibility and their need for taking care of members of their own communities, so that is indeed in there.

2120

The other point I would like to make, as there have been references made a number of times to the funding framework, is that the legislation does not delineate the

requirements in that funding framework, but what that framework is very clearly designed to do is to support the work of children's aid societies. It recognizes that local needs may be different. But in addition, the other point is that there have to be standards. That is something, again, that was very clear in coroners' inquests, that one of the reasons children fell between the cracks was because there weren't clear standards applied the right way in all children's aid societies. That is why there are standards and that is why we will be funding according to those quality standards. That is an important improvement in the system and should be seen as such.

I understand the intention of the honourable member in bringing this particular amendment forward, but we do believe that all the sections that are in this legislation, as I rhymed them off, do indeed recognize First Nations' authority in these matters.

Ms Frances Lankin (Beaches-Woodbine): I want to very quickly comment on the minister's comments. There's only one amendment on the floor and there's a second one to be dealt with so I will keep my comments very brief.

I say to the minister that in her iteration of all the sections of the existing legislation that deal with First Nations, she misses the point, which is with respect to the changes in the purpose section. I acknowledge and my leader acknowledges that those provisions remain. You yourself hit the nub of the issue when you talked about the amendments to the purpose section which give a paramount purpose to the act, that paramount purpose being the best interests of the children.

As you indicated, the old act had a number of purposes and there was confusion sometimes in the mind of the court. The new act sets out a paramount purpose, the best interests of the children, and then sets out a number of additional purposes. Within those additional purposes is the language with respect to Indian and native people and that, where it is consistent, they are entitled to provide "wherever possible, their own child and family services," and that those be provided "in a manner that recognizes their culture, heritage and traditions and the concept of the extended family."

What we are proposing to you by these amendments is that that should be elevated out of the list of additional purposes. It shouldn't be relegated to the same level as consideration of the family unit, consideration of a whole range of other issues that you've set out in the act. It should be brought up into the paramount section. Clearly, however, with the language we've put forward, it remains subservient to your paramount objective because we say:

"It is a purpose of this act, so long as it is consistent with the best interests, protection and well-being of children, to recognize that Indian and native people are entitled to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services, and that all services to Indian and native children and families should be provided in a manner that recognizes their culture, heritage and traditions and the concept of the extended family."

Minister, it is the very fact that we are talking about dealing government to government, where you're talking First Nations, that their interests and their provision of services and the culturally sensitive provisions within the legislation should not be relegated to simply a list of additional purposes, that it should be elevated. Nothing in our proposal takes away from the paramount best interests of the child.

I say to your parliamentary assistant, who called this cosmetic, that if it were cosmetic you would not be making the change to set out a paramount section and relegating all other issues to additional purposes. If that is not cosmetic, neither is it cosmetic to take the section dealing with First Nations and their very important concerns and elevate that to a subsection of the paramount concern. It gives an expression of this Legislative Assembly and our desire to recognize First Nations and to see, on a very fair and equal footing, that their interests are of an extreme purpose, of a paramount purpose, only subservient to the best interests of the child.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): I just wanted to mention that my party will be supporting the amendment. I was happy to hear the comments from the minister. In fact, the minister's comments actually strengthen the argument to allow the amendment to stand and be passed by the House, other than for some political purpose to not be supportive of an opposition party amendment to the bill. If in fact the balance of the bill repeatedly spells out in further detail the importance of the First Nations people, and in particular in treatment, there would be no reason to add this in this section either, so frankly her comments actually support the notion that it should be included in that first section.

Secondly, I do think that the whole process — not having been allowed to have hearings, most First Nations and all whom we have contacted feel as though they've been shut out of the process completely. The minister's comments are of great concern to me because it has been a closed door process. We have not had access to what's been presented to the government. When the expert panel made their report, there were many people who participated in the expert panel to say, "Why was so much left out, if in fact you were listening to the expert panel?"

While you may have gone forward to ask people, we have no idea, as members of the opposition who have a due role to play in the process of public hearings, in the development of what the bill may have been and what amendments could have come forward. That was not allowed in this case, and there is no good reason not to be supportive of this amendment. On behalf of my party, we will be supporting this one.

The Chair: Mr Hampton has moved that paragraph 5 of subsection 1(2) of the Child and Family Services Act, as set out in section 1 of the bill be struck out.

Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute bell.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Mr Chair, I ask for unanimous consent to stack the votes.

The Chair: Is there consent to stack the votes? It is agreed.

Mr Hampton: I wish to speak to the second amendment.

The Chair: Could you move it, please.

Mr Hampton: I move that section 1 of the Child and Family Services Act, as set out in section 1 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Purpose respecting Indian and native people

"(1.1) It is a purpose of this act, so long as it is consistent with the best interests, protection and well-being of children, to recognize that Indian and native people are entitled to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services, and that all services to Indian and native children and families should be provided in a manner that recognizes their culture, heritage and traditions and the concept of the extended family."

I want to again read the submissions from Tikinagan Child and Family Services and Weechi-it-te-win, because they point out the problem. This is continuing on from the Tikinagan letter. They say:

"Let's get to the root of the issue. The" government's risk assessment "model is grounded in a commitment to protect children, and in the assumption that conducting risk assessment in this way will ensure better protection for them. But consider the possibility that there are so many issues with the model for Tikinagan that it may actually undermine our ability to work effectively. Of course, we want to protect children here at the same level of standards that are applied in southern Ontario. But is it possible to consider another model, or at least a totally reworked model that would be effective here? Is it possible to have a serious discussion about what the protection needs are for kids here? Is it possible to think that Ontario would care enough about children that we could seek out programs that would really be effective here?"

To emphasize it even more, they point out: "The ministry's child welfare funding formula framework is designed to provide equitable funding in children's aid societies and to ensure standardized levels of service through the provision of a number of things."

Then they point out: "However, Tikinagan functions in a unique environment that includes numerous remote communities with extreme social problems: native languages and cultures and the intensive political involvement of local chiefs and councils. In this context, the structure and delivery of child protection services is fundamentally different from comparable services in other parts of Ontario."

That's the gravity of the situation we're dealing with. All we've asked this minister and this government to do is to move up that purpose section dealing with native child and family service agencies so that it has paramountcy in section 1 of the changes, and if it has paramountcy, in our view we suggest that the inter-

pretation would be that they would receive the priority they are deserving of. Their uniqueness would be recognized.

The Chair: Pursuant to the order of the House, I will now put the questions. Mr Hampton has moved that the Child and Family Services Act, as set out in section 1 of the bill, be amended by adding the following subsection:

"Purpose respecting Indian and native people

"(1.1) It is a purpose of this act, so long as it is consistent with the best interests, protection and well-being of children, to recognize that Indian and native people are entitled to provide, wherever possible, their own child and family services, and that all services to Indian and native children and families should be provided in a manner that recognizes their culture, heritage and traditions and the concept of the extended family."

Is it the pleasure of the House that this amendment carry?

All those in favour say "aye."

All those opposed say "nay."

In my opinion, the nays have it.

That vote will be stacked as well.

Shall sections 2 through 39 carry? Carried.

Shall the title carry? Carried.

Call in the members; it will be a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2131 to 2136.

The Chair: Mr Hampton has moved the first amendment to subsection 1(2), that the paragraph be struck out.

All those in favour of that, please rise and remain standing.

All those opposed, please rise and remain standing.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): The ayes are 10; the nays are 35.

The Chair: I declare the amendment lost.

Mr Hampton has moved that subsection (1.1) be added.

All those in favour will please rise and remain standing.

Same vote?

Clerk Assistant: The ayes are 10; the nays are 35.

The Chair: I declare the motion lost.

Shall section 1 carry? Carried.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? Agreed.

Hon Mr Sterling: Mr Chairman, I move that the committee rise and report.

The Chair: Is it the pleasure of the committee that it rise and report? Agreed.

The committee of the whole House begs to report one bill without amendment and asks for leave to sit again.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

Pursuant to the order of the House made earlier this evening, we will now proceed with third reading.

CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES
AMENDMENT ACT
(CHILD WELFARE REFORM), 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR LES SERVICES À L'ENFANCE
ET À LA FAMILLE (RÉFORME
DU BIEN-ÊTRE DE L'ENFANCE)

Mrs Ecker moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 6, An Act to amend the Child and Family Services
Act in order to better promote the best interests,

protection and well-being of children / Projet de loi 6,
Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfance et à la
famille afin de mieux promouvoir l'intérêt véritable de
l'enfant, sa protection et son bien-être.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr Bert Johnson): Is it the
pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled
as in the motion.

It now being 9:40, this House stands adjourned until
1:30 o'clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2140.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenante-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

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Algoma	Wildman, Bud (ND)	Frontenac-Addington	Vankoughnet, Bill (PC)
Algoma-Manitoulin	Brown, Michael A. (L)	Grey-Owen Sound	Murdoch, Bill (PC)
Beaches-Woodbine	Lankin, Frances (ND)	Guelph	Elliott, Brenda (PC)
Brampton North / -Nord	Spina, Joseph (PC)	Halton Centre / -Centre	Young, Terence H. (PC)
Brampton South / -Sud	Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony (PC) Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports	Halton North / -Nord	Chudleigh, Ted (PC)
Brant-Haldimand	Preston, Peter L. (PC)	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	Christopherson, David (ND)
Brantford	Johnson, Ron (PC)	Hamilton East / -Est	Agostino, Dominic (L)
Bruce	Fisher, Barbara (PC)	Hamilton Mountain	Pettit, Trevor (PC)
Burlington South / -Sud	Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron (PC) Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Soins de longue durée, ministre délégué aux affaires des personnes âgées	Hamilton West / -Ouest	Ross, Lillian (PC)
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Carleton East / -Est	Morin, Gilles E. (L)	Huron	Johns, Helen (PC)
Chatham-Kent	Carroll, Jack (PC)	Kenora	Miclash, Frank (L)
Cochrane North / -Nord	Wood, Len (ND)	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	Gerretsen, John (L)
Cochrane South / -Sud	Bisson, Gilles (ND)	Kitchener	Wettlaufer, Wayne (PC)
Cornwall	Cleary, John C. (L)	Kitchener-Wilmot	Leadston, Gary L. (PC)
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Dovercourt	Silipo, Tony (ND)	Lambton	Beaubien, Marcel (PC)
Downsview	Castrilli, Annamarie (L)	Lanark-Renfrew	Jordan, W. Leo (PC)
Dufferin-Peel	Tilson, David (PC)	Lawrence	Cordiano, Joseph (L)
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Durham East / -Est	O'Toole, John R. (PC)	Lincoln	Sheehan, Frank (PC)
Durham West / -Ouest	Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet (PC) Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires	London Centre / -Centre	Boyd, Marion (ND)
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Eglinton	Saunderson, William (PC)	London South / -Sud	Wood, Bob (PC)
Elgin	North, Peter (Ind)	Markham	Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H. (PC) Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Essex-Kent	Hoy, Pat (L)	Middlesex	Smith, Bruce (PC)
Essex South / -Sud	Crozier, Bruce (L)	Mississauga East / -Est	DeFaria, Carl (PC)
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Etobicoke-Lakeshore	Kells, Morley (PC)	Mississauga South / -Sud	Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Children's Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (enfance)
Etobicoke-Rexdale	Hastings, John (PC)	Mississauga West / -Ouest	Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob (PC) Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (privatisation)
Etobicoke West / -Ouest	Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Speaker / Président	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	Grimmett, Bill (PC)
Fort William	McLeod, Lyn (L)		
Fort York	Marchese, Rosario (ND)		

Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti	Constituency Circonscription	Member/Party Député(e) / Parti
Nepcan	Baird, John R. (PC)	Sarnia	Boushy, Dave (PC)
Niagara Falls	Maves, Bart (PC)	Sault Ste Marie / Sault-Sainte-Marie	Martin, Tony (ND)
Niagara South / -Sud	Hudak, Tim (PC)	Scarborough-Agincourt	Phillips, Gerry (L)
Nickel Belt	Morin, Blain K. (NDP)	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	Newman, Dan (PC)
Nipissing	Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D. (PC) Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif	Scarborough East / -Est	Gilchrist, Steve (PC)
Norfolk	Barrett, Toby (PC)	Scarborough-Ellesmere	Mushinski, Marilyn (PC)
Northumberland	Galt, Doug (PC)	Scarborough North / -Nord	Curling, Alvin (L)
Oakville South / -Sud	Carr, Gary (PC)	Scarborough West / -Ouest	Brown, Jim (PC)
Oakwood	Colle, Mike (L)	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	Tascona, Joseph N. (PC)
Oriole	Caplan, David (L)	Simcoe East / -Est	McLean, Allan K. (PC)
Oshawa	Ouellette, Jerry J. (PC)	Simcoe West / -Ouest	Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim (PC) Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Ottawa Centre / -Centre	Patten, Richard (L)	Sudbury	Bartolucci, Rick (L)
Ottawa East / -Est	Grandmaître, Bernard (L)	Sudbury East / -Est	Martel, Shelley (ND)
Ottawa-Rideau	Guzzo, Garry J. (PC)	Timiskaming	Ramsay, David (L)
Ottawa South / -Sud	McGuinty, Dalton (L) Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition	Victoria-Haliburton	Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris (PC) Minister of Northern Development and Mines, Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, président du Conseil de gestion
Ottawa West / -Ouest	Cullen, Alex (ND)	Waterloo North / -Nord	Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth (PC) Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Oxford	Hardeman, Ernie (PC)	Welland-Thorold	Kormos, Peter (ND)
Parkdale	Ruprecht, Tony (L)	Wellington	Arnott, Ted (PC)
Parry Sound	Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L. (PC) Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances	Wentworth East / -Est	Doyle, Ed (PC)
Perth	Johnson, Bert (PC)	Wentworth North / -Nord	Skarica, Toni (PC)
Peterborough	Stewart, R. Gary (PC)	Willowdale	Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles (PC) Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Port Arthur	Gravelle, Michael (L)	Wilson Heights	Kwinter, Monte (L)
Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	Lalonde, Jean-Marc (L)	Windsor-Riverside	Lessard, Wayne (ND)
Prince Edward-Lennox- South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox- Hastings-Sud	Fox, Gary (PC)	Windsor-Sandwich	Pupatello, Sandra (L)
Quinte	Rollins, E.J. Douglas (PC)	Windsor-Walkerville	Duncan, Dwight (L)
Rainy River	Hampton, Howard (ND) Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique	York Centre / -Centre	Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Renfrew North / -Nord	Conway, Sean G. (L)	York East / -Est	Parker, John L. (PC)
Riverdale	Churley, Marilyn (ND)	York Mills	Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David (PC) Minister without Portfolio / ministre sans portefeuille
S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble (PC) Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones	York-Mackenzie	Klees, Frank (PC)
St Andrew-St Patrick	Bassett, Hon / L'hon Isabel (PC) Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs	Yorkview	Sergio, Mario (L)
St Catharines	Bradley, James J. (L)	York South / -Sud	Kennedy, Gerard (L)
St Catharines-Brock	Froese, Tom (PC)		
St George-St David	Leach, Hon / L'hon Al (PC) Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement		

A list arranged by members' surnames and including all responsibilities of each member appears in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month.

Une liste alphabétique des noms des députés, comprenant toutes les responsabilités de chaque député, figure dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et le premier lundi de chaque mois.

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Gouvernement
D'Ontario



No. 7A

N° 7A

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 4 May 1999

Mardi 4 mai 1999

Speaker
Honourable Chris Stockwell

Président
L'honorable Chris Stockwell

Clerk
Claude L. DesRosiers

Greffier
Claude L. DesRosiers



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 4 May 1999

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 4 mai 1999

*The House met at 1329.
Prayers.*

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

PROBATION AND PAROLE SERVICES

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): I am joined in the lobby today by two members of OPSEU who are probation and parole officers. I will be presenting to the Solicitor General, when he arrives later today, copies of a petition these great public officials have pulled together.

Let me read excerpts to you: "Our work is in a state of crisis. Public safety is at risk. Legislative reform, lack of mental health services, work restructuring and cuts to community resources increasingly make our work dangerous.

"We are faced with refusing to accept new cases because doing so means we have to choose who not to see and who not to serve. Caseload and workload issues have been brought to the attention of our employer, the Ministry of the Solicitor General and Correctional Services, since the early 1990s, but the past four years have taken us to the brink of crisis. Despite our efforts, caseloads are 67% higher."

I see the crime fighters over there, the people who are going to fight crime. What have they done? They've cut funding for probation and parole services to the point where our officers, our dedicated public servants, can't work to ensure an effectively maintained public safety in our communities.

This government's record on crime and safety is nothing but a lot of hot air and wind and the people will see through it when they vote four or five weeks hence.

SERVICES MÉDICAUX DANS LE NORD

M. Gilles Bisson (Cochrane-Sud): Ma déclaration s'adresse à la ministre de la Santé. Vous savez que, durant le temps que nous étions le gouvernement, de 1990 à 1995, le gouvernement NPD a mis en place des centres de santé communautaires à travers la province pour être capable de répondre à la pénurie de médecins dans ces communautés, et aussi pour être capable d'additionner les services nécessaires dans les communautés pour que

les communautés aient un service de santé plein et complet.

Vous savez aussi que ce programme était un gros succès. Justement, on a vu beaucoup de médecins qui ont été assurés dans ces communautés où qu'on a ouvert un centre de santé. Vous le savez, madame la ministre, parce que moi-même, M. Wood et la communauté de Kapuskasing sont en train d'oeuvrer pour avoir un centre de santé communautaire à Kapuskasing. Vous avez devant vous l'application qui a été mise en place.

On vous le demande : on a une pénurie de médecins à Kapuskasing. C'est une situation très sérieuse, et on voit le centre de santé communautaire à Kapuskasing comme une bonne occasion pour attirer des nouveaux médecins à la communauté de Kap et, en même temps, de répondre aux besoins de santé pour la communauté et pour les francophones.

On vous demande de faire ce qui doit être fait pour assurer qu'on ait l'argent nécessaire pour ouvrir ce centre de santé communautaire aussitôt que possible pour répondre aux besoins de la communauté.

PETERBOROUGH ECONOMY

Mr R. Gary Stewart (Peterborough): I am pleased to inform the members of this House of another indicator of a positive economy for Ontario and for my riding of Peterborough.

The latest edition of Canadian Markets, published by the Financial Post Data Group, indicates that Peterborough is ranked second in Canada in retail sales per capita for populations over 100,000.

Retail sales jumped from \$8,900 to \$10,100 per capita income dollars from last year's data. Peterborough's retail sales are 18% above the national average, up from 12% last year and continuing a strong climb.

Susan Cudahy, president and CEO of the Greater Peterborough Area Economic Development Corp, is quoted as saying, "Positive statistics like this will encourage investors to look at Peterborough as an excellent place to do business."

Retail sales are a strong indicator of the strength of Ontario's economic climate. Reports such as this demonstrate that there is confidence in the future of Ontario. A strong economy gives Peterborough the resources to support a strong social system. We are on the right track.

PRIVATIZATION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): While the Harris government tries to portray itself as giving taxpayers a break in eliminating red tape and extra costs to Ontario businesses, the fact is that its mad drive towards privatization is increasing costs dramatically in both areas.

Consider this example: By quietly privatizing the Technical Standards and Safety Authority, companies like Fort James-Marathon have seen dramatic cost increases for elevator maintenance. In addition, the costs of annual inspections under the Electrical Safety Authority have risen sixfold at Fort James, from \$2,000 in 1998 to over \$12,000 in 1999.

As Bob Gregor, president of Fort James, stated to me in a recent letter, and I quote him: "If government policies force us to limit the use of our highly skilled personnel in order to increase dependency on outside contractors and agencies, then our costs soar and our ability to compete suffers." How is forcing Fort James and other industries to pay these extra costs helping our businesses compete?

Or consider the Ministry of Transportation's absolute determination to privatize our road maintenance in this province. In the Thunder Bay district private tenders came back at several times the price of past government expenditures, yet the ministry still says they intend to privatize this important Ontario public service. Meanwhile the ministry is selling off major pieces of its road maintenance equipment at fire sale prices.

How is this benefiting Ontario taxpayers, you may ask. The answer is, it's not. It's a rip-off for taxpayers and we should all be furious about it.

CANCER TREATMENT

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): I have a letter from Tami Fujimoto, whose mother, Sue Fujimoto, was diagnosed with cancer three months ago. I'm going to read an excerpt from this letter. This is a letter of agony and despair about a very sick, beloved mother. I'm quoting here:

"We do not want our mother to become a victim of the government's major underfunding in cancer radiation treatments and the lack of hiring of specialized doctors and more. I am asking you if you could please help us by ensuring that adequate funding is given to cancer clinics so that sufficient staff can be hired and that more machinery and technology can be purchased. Unfortunately, we do not believe in Harris's public broadcast announcements seen on television and heard over the radio where he claims there will be increased funding for cancer treatments, etc. If he were serious about this he would act upon his words this instant. But he has not and I believe will not. If he could only direct half the money paid for his election campaign advertisements towards improving care for cancer patients. This is the real frustration with our province's government — poor spending habits.

"I hope that you will consider my plea. My family and I are feeling quite desperate and will go to any length, as you would if someone very dear to you were afflicted with an aggressive and deadly cancer, to ensure that our mother receives the best care."

EDUCATION REFORM

Mr Doug Galt (Northumberland): This past weekend Teachers for Excellence and the Parent Network held a Leadership for Change conference at Toronto's Inn on the Park. I commend the organizers and all the teachers who attended the conference for seeking new ways to deliver top-quality education to Ontario's students. But most of all, I would like to compliment them for having the courage to stand up and be counted as supporters of education reform.

These teachers are true professionals in that they do not accept that there is only one way to teach. They are forward-thinking individuals with one of the most important attributes for a teacher: an open mind. How sad for those teachers who have been taken in by the rhetoric of their self-serving unions. How encouraging to see that there are many teachers who are willing to embrace change.

My compliments to both Bob Bonisteel of Teachers for Excellence and Cathy Cove of the Parent Network for this weekend's wonderful effort on behalf of teachers across Ontario who have real concerns for the students of this province.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): At noon today I had the honour of sponsoring the Parents for Educational Choice rally at the main entrance to the Legislature. Thousands of people, made up of students, parents, friends and concerned citizens, gathered to express their simple message: Fair funding in education means fair funding for every student in Ontario. The people attending the rally today were made up of representatives from independent day schools from across Ontario.

The issue is one of fairness and equity. In a multicultural society all parents should have the right to expect that their children have access to a first-rate educational system and, if they choose, to have a religious component as part of that education. The schools that were represented at today's rally provide a secular curriculum that meets or exceeds Ministry of Education standards, and their students historically achieve academic results that are equal to, and in many cases superior to, results achieved in the public school system.

The governments of BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec and more than 60 countries in the democratic world provide funding to independent schools. Parents who choose to send their children to these independent religious schools in Ontario pay the full cost of this education and also continue to pay

through their taxes the cost of funding public schools. Their request is simple. In fairness, government should fund the secular portion of their children's education.

I'd like to introduce Professor Irwin Kottler, an internationally recognized lawyer and advocate for human rights.

1340

HAMILTON PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I'm pleased to advise the House that my leader, Howard Hampton, was in Hamilton yesterday, in the newer part of the riding I'm running in, Hamilton West, on the mountain, and announcing to the community that indeed a New Democratic government would save the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital that this government right now is planning to close.

Interjections.

Mr Christopherson: I hear a couple of comments from the Liberals over here. It's interesting. All they're going to do is — wait for it — they're going to review the hospital closure. At this stage of the game, you're either lining up behind the Tories and saying you're going to keep it closed and keep that in place or you're going to stand up for the community, stand up for the people in Hamilton and say that the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital is too important to close and it will stay open. That's the position that should be taken.

Why can we take that position? Because on the 30% tax cut, unlike the Liberals, we've said we'll roll it back for the top 6% income earners who right now are getting \$4.1 million a day. Some \$4.1 million a day is going from the have-nots to the haves and that's justice according to the Tories. It's also justice according to the Liberals because they're not going to do anything about it. Only the NDP will roll it back and use that money to save the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital.

YORK COUNTY HOSPITAL

Mrs Julia Munro (Durham-York): On Monday, May 3, I was pleased to announce this government's approval of up to \$64 million to support York County Hospital's Redevelopment 2002 project. Monday's announcement also included one-time funding of \$162,000 to provide 500 cardiac catheterization procedures.

This funding announcement means renovations, new construction and specialized treatment services, including one of which I am most proud, the creation of a new full-service cardiac surgical centre in Newmarket. People living in northern York and southern Simcoe will no longer have to travel so far from home to receive the cardiac care they require.

Dan Carriere, president and CEO of York County Hospital, is quoted as saying:

"The tremendous success we have realized in moving this project forward can be attributed in large part to the ongoing support from our local York region MPPs. This

announcement is even more significant when one considers that York County Hospital has been attempting to receive approval for a major redevelopment for many years without...success. These current rounds of negotiations and internal planning represent no less than our third attempt in 15 years to receive the necessary approval."

After years of empty promises from the Liberals and the NDP, I am proud to say that it was the Mike Harris government that ensured this project at York County Hospital became a reality. The Harris government has clearly demonstrated its commitment to quality care in a stronger Ontario.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

MENTAL HEALTH AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI SUR LA SANTÉ MENTALE

Mr Patten moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 29, An Act to amend the Mental Health Act /
Projet de loi 29, Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): This bill is An Act to amend the Mental Health Act and is an attempt to help those persons who have serious mental illnesses and who have had a revolving door experience, often with sad and tragic results. The intent is to provide them and their families with the best possible supervision, care and treatment.

I know that with the long session before us, it will have a chance to reach third reading.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): Mr Speaker, I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to introduce a bill on behalf of Tony Silipo, the member for Dovercourt, who is in the budget lock-up.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

ACCESS TO OCCUPATIONS ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 SUR L'ACCÈS AUX PROFESSIONS

Ms Churley, on behalf of Mr Silipo, moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 30, An Act to ensure the recognition in Ontario of credentials obtained outside Ontario / Projet de loi 30, Loi visant à assurer la reconnaissance en Ontario des titres de compétence obtenus en dehors de cette province.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): This act does two things. First, it establishes a credentials assessment

agency that will assess occupational credentials obtained outside Ontario, and second, if a person's credentials are found to be at least equivalent to specified credentials obtained in Ontario, the act gives him or her the same rights as his or her Ontario counterparts.

I will be asking for quick passage of this bill in the House later today.

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY
OF HALDIMAND-NORFOLK
STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT DES LOIS
EN CE QUI CONCERNE
LA MUNICIPALITÉ RÉGIONALE
DE HALDIMAND-NORFOLK

Mr Barrett moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 31, An Act to amend certain statutes with respect to The Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk / Projet de loi 31, Loi modifiant certaines lois en ce qui concerne la municipalité régionale de Haldimand-Norfolk.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinion, the ayes have it.

I declare the motion carried.

Mr Toby Barrett (Norfolk): By way of explanation, this bill provides for the direct election of the chair of the regional municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk by a vote of the electors of the area municipalities held concurrently with the regular election in the area municipalities starting with the regular election in the year 2000.

The prohibition against the chair voting at meetings of the regional council is removed once the chair is elected by direct election.

STUDENT HEALTH AND SAFETY
PROGRAMS ACT, 1999
LOI DE 1999 SUR LES PROGRAMMES
DE SANTÉ ET DE SÉCURITÉ
POUR ÉTUDIANTS

Mr Gravelle moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 32, An Act to bring health and safety programs to Ontario students / Projet de loi 32, Loi visant à offrir des programmes de santé et de sécurité aux étudiants de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Michael Gravelle (Port Arthur): I want to thank Ross Singleton with the Ontario Network of Injured Workers and Steve Mantis of the Canadian Injured Workers Alliance for helping create this bill.

The bill will create the Health and Safety Education Council of Ontario. The council will advise the Minister

of Education and Training and the Minister of Labour about programs to educate secondary school students about workplace health and safety and the prevention of workplace injury and occupational disease.

ASSESSMENT AMENDMENT ACT, 1999

LOI DE 1999 MODIFIANT LA LOI
SUR L'ÉVALUATION FONCIÈRE

Mr Christopherson moved first reading of the following bill:

Bill 33, An Act to amend the Assessment Act / Projet de loi 33, Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation foncière.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): Briefly, currently the Assessment Act provides for some property tax relief for individuals whose family members become disabled and who have to renovate or make changes to their home. This does not apply to those who choose to build a new home. My amendment would allow that property tax relief to also be applied to individuals who build a new home to accommodate the needs of a newly handicapped individual.

It has also been supported by the OMB, who state very clearly that they wanted to do this but the wording of the law didn't allow it. My amendment would give effect to allowing their desire to take place because it would then be entrenched in law.

1350

MOTIONS

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BUSINESS

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move that notwithstanding standing order 95(d), Mr Shea and Mr O'Toole exchange places in the order of precedence for private members' public business.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

MEMBERS' INTEGRITY

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I beg to inform the House that pursuant to section 30 of the Members' Integrity Act, 1994, I have today laid upon the table a request by the member for Windsor-Sandwich to the Honourable Robert C. Rutherford, Integrity Commissioner, for opinion on whether the member for Waterloo North has contravened the act or Ontario parliamentary convention.

ORAL QUESTIONS

GASOLINE PRICES

Mr Frank Miclash (Kenora): My question is to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations. Gasoline prices in northern Ontario is an issue that has been studied to find not only by yourself but by the former NDP government, and you as well as they have only paid lip service to that issue. My constituents are certainly tired of your government blaming others for the fact that they are paying some 16 cents per litre more than those in the south for gasoline.

Minister, would you tell my constituents what your plan is in terms of correcting this problem and if there will be anything in today's budget that we might see to help us in northern Ontario?

Hon David H. Tsubouchi (Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations): As the member full well knows, this is something that's a federal responsibility, and has been.

This is really funny, listening to the Liberals particularly, since the parliamentary secretary —

Interjections.

Mrs Sandra Pupatello (Windsor-Sandwich): Where are the gas-busters now? What happened to your gas-busters?

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Minister.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: Since the members over there in the opposition are asking me to speak about the gas-busters, I certainly would be pleased to accommodate them. We have Joe Tascona, the member from Simcoe, who has taken quite a lead right now in trying to monitor the prices.

If you look back, it's quite interesting. When the gas-busters were actually looking at the prices across the province and monitoring the prices before the long weekend, if we go back and analyze what happened, it's kind of funny that the prices didn't go up. Because they were fairly successful, we decided OK, they've finally done their job. Dan McTeague, who is the federal Liberal member trying to get through his bill —

The Speaker: Thank you. Supplementary.

Mr Miclash: Minister, your gas-busters did absolutely nothing for the consumers in the north, absolutely nothing.

Let me read from a May 15, 1998, Toronto Star article which shows how much concern you have in terms of northern residents when it comes to gas prices. "Petro-Canada spokesperson McMahon said Tsubouchi met on April 12 with the association representing oil companies and he expressed no concern about gas prices" — absolutely no concern.

Minister, this parallels the lack of concern the Premier has, the Premier who reintroduced the tax in terms of vehicle registration in the north. It parallels that.

I again call upon you, as the minister responsible for the unacceptable price of gasoline in my riding, to

explain why you have chosen to side with the big oil companies rather than my northern constituents.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: I don't have the particular article in front of me, but I can assure you of this. The member is looking at an article from the Toronto Star quoting the guy who's in charge of all the big gas companies. I assure you, when we had this meeting — you weren't there, obviously — we especially expressed the unacceptability of the volatility and the high prices of gas in the province. That's why we reinstituted the gas-busters under Joe Tascona; that's why we're monitoring again, because certainly that's important.

Now, having said that, to put context to this, the fact is it's a competition matter. It really is part of the federal government, the federal Liberals. You could probably pick up the phone and wonder why the federal Liberal government quashed — in committee tried to put away Dan McTeague's bill. If you guys have the influence you say you have — because you're relying on federal money right now to fund all the changes you want to do in the upcoming election. Obviously, you don't have much influence to do that, because you can't even call them up to do something about gas prices.

Mr Miclash: I was not invited to the meeting to which you refer, but had I been invited to that meeting I would have been standing up for my constituents, who are paying 16 cents a litre more for gasoline in the north.

At the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association meeting, this issue was front and centre. They want to know what you're doing in terms of my suggestion to provide them with a consumer advocate, somebody who will act on behalf of the consumer when it comes to gas prices in northern Ontario. They also want you to explain to them why our constituents in northwestern Ontario are paying some 16 cents more per litre for gasoline. Your gas-busters did absolutely nothing when it came to gasoline prices in the north, absolutely nothing. It was a complete joke.

Can you tell them about what's happening in terms of my suggestion for a consumer advocate to act on their behalf and why they are paying some 16 cents more per litre?

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The gas-busters looked at the volatility of gas prices. As I said, because of their monitoring, they had what looked like a profound effect on the fluctuations prior to the long weekends.

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): Yes, pass my bill.

Hon Mr Tsubouchi: The member for St Catharines is talking about something he wants to do. What might be more effective is to talk to the parliamentary secretary for the federal government, the parliamentary secretary for John Manley. You share the riding with him. He's the guy that quashed Dan McTeague's bill. Why don't you just walk down the road, talk to the colleague who shares St Catharines with you and say, "Look, why don't you support Dan McTeague's bill?" If you have such influence, why don't you try to do that? Obviously you haven't done that, because this fellow, Walt Lastewka,

has quashed Dan McTeague's bill. If you guys want to do something — you're in government so you know this, or you should know this — the fact is that this is a competition matter. You should be supporting Dan McTeague, which you obviously are not doing.

1400

HEALTH CARE

Mr Pat Hoy (Essex-Kent): My question is to the Minister of Health. In Chatham-Kent-Essex, we are experiencing a critical doctor shortage that your government has made only token attempts to fix. Your primary care project is a farce. It does nothing to help physicians like Dr Button in Ridgetown, who has a caseload of 7,000 patients. There is still no funding mechanism for nurse practitioners to help rural doctors practising on their own, like Dr Button. You haven't lifted the freeze on community health centres to help rural areas like Tilbury.

The Chatham-Kent Health Alliance tells me they are hanging by a thread and desperately need doctors now. They say you are not committing enough money to accredit foreign-trained physicians. They say people are overloading the emergency wards because we don't have enough doctors, yet the \$36.4 million you promised for the doctor shortage —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Question.

Mr Hoy: — and announced over and over again has not been spent. Nobody trusts you and nobody trusts Mike Harris on health care. Tell me, Minister —

The Speaker: Thank you.

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): Actually, our government has taken some very significant steps to encourage physicians to set up practice in rural and northern communities in this province. As you also know, it was our government that put in place the rural and northern framework and it's our government that is now looking at the whole issue of physician supply to evaluate the situation in the province and to move forward.

We have introduced many initiatives. It was our government that introduced the nurse practitioner legislation; it is our government now that is working with the nurse practitioners to set up practices where they can provide primary care; it is our government that has lifted the freeze on the community health centres; and it is our government that finally has a plan of action to provide services throughout the province.

The Speaker: Supplementary, the member for Cornwall.

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): I have a question to the same minister. I continue to hear from patients in the greater Cornwall area about the lack of staff and services at the local hospitals. Long waiting lists and the lack of hospital beds are putting patients' lives on the line. I recently had a letter from Dr Robert Harris, in which he points out that because of the restructuring commission ruling, facilities in outpatient surgery at the Hotel Dieu

Hospital are being scaled back and the services do not exist at Cornwall General Hospital. As a result, these surgery patients are in limbo and there's no way they can receive the treatment. Dr Harris writes: "Hospital cut-backs are now so serious that virtually no provision is made for surgical management of these cases."

Minister, your government cut health care. Hospital restructuring seriously affects the care in my riding and across the province. What will you do to ensure that Cornwall and area patients receive the treatment they deserve and require now?

Hon Mrs Witmer: As the member knows, it was our government that had the courage to take a look at health services within this province. Unfortunately, previous governments refused to take the tough decisions. We embarked on a process to revitalize and strengthen health services everywhere throughout this province. We were the very last province in Canada to do so. We have added \$1.5 billion to the health budget.

People in this province today have more health services than ever before. In your own community of Cornwall, you know that your community today has access to dialysis services; that has meant that those people no longer have to travel to Ottawa or Kingston. You have programs that never existed before. There's more money for programs such as long-term care, community care services, dialysis.

The Speaker: Answer.

Hon Mrs Witmer: In each and every area, people in your community have access to more appropriate services than they have ever had in the past, and more money is going —

The Speaker: Final supplementary, member for Windsor-Walkerville.

Mr Dwight Duncan (Windsor-Walkerville): The minister and the government's \$100 million in health care ads and other types of ads tell one story, but the facts tell another. In our community, two hospitals were closed down by the previous government, with promises of reinvestment. Your predecessor went in and said, "Here's your money." In our community, a cancer care centre was reannounced in 1996 amid much fanfare; in came your predecessor, but as of yesterday, the ground hadn't been turned. When you took office, in our community we had a shortage of 34 family physicians, and today we have a shortage of 38 family physicians. Your own Health Services Restructuring Commission recommended more than \$100 million in reinvestments, and to date virtually none of it has flowed from the provincial government.

Minister, you're a cop-out. The people of this province don't trust your government. They don't believe you. They don't believe you because of redirects from emergency rooms; they don't believe you because they have to go to the US for radiation treatment; and they don't believe you because they can't get a family doctor. Why don't we stop this charade and have an election right now?

Hon Mrs Witmer: It is very unfortunate that the member opposite does not provide a complete picture of

health spending in the Windsor community. If the Windsor member indeed were acknowledging the whole picture, he would know there is about \$77 million being spent in Essex county beyond what was available in 1995. If we take a look at the whole issue of emergency room funding, we know there has been —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Members for Windsor-Sandwich and Windsor-Walkerville, come to order.

Hon Mrs Witmer: It's obvious the party opposite realizes it has no plan for health care reform. They unfortunately have recognized that we do. On my many trips to Windsor, the citizens of Windsor have indicated to me personally their very strong support for the initiatives that our government has undertaken to strengthen not only hospital services but also health services.

Let me read from the newsletter of the Windsor Regional Hospital, February-March of this year: "The completed emergency department" — that's the one we have provided for — "will have better visibility and patient flow will improve. As well, the ER will have new equipment, including stretchers" —

The Speaker: New question, third party.

PLANT CLOSURE

Mr Len Wood (Cochrane North): I have a question for the Minister of Northern Development and Mines. On March 16, I wrote you a letter and brought to your attention the downsizing of Abitibi-Consolidated in Iroquois Falls. That's a town with 6,000 population. It is a one-company town, so the loss of these jobs — I might point out they're good jobs — will be devastating to the local economy.

In situations like this it's up to the provincial government, through your minister, to take a leadership role. When the NDP was in government, we were faced with a massive layoff at Spruce Falls Power and Paper Co in Kapuskasing. We took the leadership role. We sat down with the interested parties and brokered a deal that saw an employee buyout, saving hundreds of jobs.

I asked you in a March 16 letter, and I ask you again now, what steps have you taken and what steps do you plan to take to make sure the impact on the Iroquois Falls economy is not as severe as it looks like it's going to be at the present time?

Hon Chris Hodgson (Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines): The member from the third party is correct, I have talked to the mayor of Iroquois Falls. We've set up a committee that's looking at assistance and a long-term plan. It's not good enough to just throw money at a situation. I think he talked about some of the endeavours they've done in the past in communities that have faced this unfortunate circumstance.

As the member knows, this wasn't unanticipated. It wasn't like as a result of NDP policies, when you had massive factory closures right across the province. It wasn't that way at all. This was as part of the anticipated

evolving of that industry. I have talked to the mayor and local officials and there is a committee set up to try to work on the adjustments and how the economy there can adapt.

1410

Mr Len Wood: This is clearly not good enough. What they were anticipating was a 50-person layoff with the shutdown of a paper machine. Instead, Abitibi-Consolidated announced up to 240 people being laid off as a result of the modernization. This was not expected in the community; it was a shock to the community and it still is.

Today the NDP is showing creativity in northern Ontario. We've announced our three specific commitments to northern Ontario. One is to eliminate the registration fees on passenger cars to help the gas problem. Another is to create a northern resource fund to help out communities like Iroquois Falls. This fund will return money from resource revenues to the north and it will balance the boom-and-bust nature of the northern Ontario economy by supporting job creation and training and traditional assistance to laid-off workers. I might point out that the third one is that we will help bring doctors to the north.

The kind of leadership that the NDP has shown in the past was good. Why does your ministry lack the courage, the vision and the leadership to do some of the very same things that have to be done for Iroquois Falls?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I think everyone in this House has some compassion for the people of Iroquois Falls and the situation they're facing. The best way to approach that is to get the local people together with officials from our ministry — the Ministry of Education and Training has put in some dollars — to try to work through a plan that will bring economic success to Iroquois Falls, like our policies have brought success to the rest of Ontario.

He mentions the NDP record. Your record on raising taxes and spending in this province created a net loss of 10,000 jobs over your term in office. Our policies of cutting taxes to create growth and stimulate the economy have created 540,000 net new jobs. Those are the facts.

He also mentions the NDP platform, their clear vision. You're right, you stand on a policy that says you want to go back to the policies of the past of raising taxes. You're very clear on that and that's what you believe in. We choose a different track and we want to raise the opportunities of all the people of Ontario. The heritage fund has done a tremendous job on that, to try to level the playing field with southern Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Supplementary, the member for Cochrane South.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I find it interesting that you state your policies while in government. If the truth be known, on average two people per day have been leaving northern Ontario since you have taken power because of your policies, contrary to the NDP, where we saw a net growth in the population by 16,000 people because of the deals that we made in places like

Kapuskasing, Sault Ste Marie, Thunder Bay and many other communities across northern Ontario.

Minister, you're saying that you're working with the community in order to develop some kind of committee to be able to deal with what's happening in Iroquois Falls. There's been an application on your desk for six weeks asking for \$141,000 in order to get the adjustment committee going and not yet a word from your government or your desk to the community of Iroquois Falls. Minister, when are you going to move on that application?

Hon Mr Hodgson: I'll take a look at that. We've been working with the community. The committee of adjustment has been set up. I'll check on why the dollars haven't flowed, if that is the case.

I can tell you that you can compare your jobs record to our jobs record, and I'll do that any day of the week: 540,000 net new jobs across the province of Ontario. We've cut the tax rate in this province to create growth, and it's working. In northern Ontario the heritage fund is there to try to build an infrastructure, not like the NDP policy of picking winners and losers in the market and subsidizing businesses but by creating a true infrastructure. Last week we had an announcement on telecommunications to wire up over 200 communities across northern Ontario.

ACCESS TO PROFESSIONS AND TRADES

Ms Marilyn Churley (Riverdale): My question is for the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation. Over half of Canada's immigrants come to Ontario. Many of these people have valuable skills and expertise but they can't get jobs when their skills aren't recognized.

During the last election Mike Harris promised "swift action" to deal with access to professions and trades. He took swift action, all right. He killed the Cabinet Round Table on Anti-Racism that was dealing with the issue and he didn't stop there. Your government repealed employment equity, which would have opened the doors to jobs for visible minorities and others.

In December 1995, Minister Mushinski promised to set up a service for assessing academic credentials. Today, Minister, on behalf of the NDP's deputy leader, Tony Silipo, I introduced the Access to Occupations Act that will recognize the skills and talents of immigrants and set up a process for recognizing their credentials. Will you support the fast passage of this act today?

Hon Isabel Bassett (Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation): First of all, I thank you for bringing this to my attention because it's a matter that we have moved forward steadily on since we were elected in 1995. In terms of access to professions, there are two main challenges. One is the academic credentials. As you know, following the study that we had done looking into the needs in this area, which was completed, we have our RFP out. I would think that by the end of the year we would have a company that is going to be running this

program so that immigrants who come in with academic credentials that are not valued —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Answer.

Hon Ms Bassett: — the same way as Ontario academic credentials are will be judged and will be allowed then to move —

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Ms Churley: I don't know who you're going to outsource this very important issue to, but let me tell you, it's been four years since your government promised to address this problem and you stand there today and talk about privatizing some scheme you have up your sleeve. Your mismanagement and avoidance of the issue has meant that skilled and talented immigrants in Ontario still aren't getting the jobs they're qualified for.

The federal Liberal head tax is a barrier to immigrants as well. The federal Liberals tell people, "Pay us your money, come in and you can practise your professions," and the reality is what happens here in Ontario. In Ontario, they face further barriers. What you and your government have to offer today are empty promises.

This is what Mike Harris said in 1994: "Support, then, for equality of opportunity is hollow rhetoric unless you support efforts to enhance these opportunities." Let's talk today about hollow rhetoric, which is once again what we heard from you. You ripped apart the programs that our government put in place to give minorities in Ontario a foothold. Will you support the legislation that's before you today?

Hon Ms Bassett: Obviously, this is not your area because what we have done is we have a program; we have acted. First of all, there are jobs for new Canadians and immigrants to move into. We've created 540,000 net new jobs, for starters. Second, we have an academic credentials assessment service. We have an RFP for somebody to take that over. It will be up and running by the end of the year. This is what we promised to do and that's exactly what you, in effect, are asking us to do. We have fulfilled our commitment and we are doing it. We continue to move forward.

Ms Churley: Stop patronizing me and us with this nonsense about this not being my area. I have constituents who have been affected by your lack of action for the last four years after your Premier promised before the last election that he would do it. Don't patronize us any more about your so-called commitment to equity. You have systematically attacked equity in employment, education, advocacy, justice and personal security. Your term in government will be remembered as an outright assault on the gains made in this province by minorities and those in favour of equal opportunity.

You have taken violence prevention and anti-discrimination out of the new secondary school curriculum and eliminated the anti-discrimination branch of the education ministry. You abandoned teacher training for anti-discrimination and cancelled policies our government put in place to establish a framework for fairness and justice in our schools.

Minister, tell me why you think it's all right to give the top 6% of Ontarians a tax cut and at the same time eliminate —

The Speaker: Thank you, Minister.

Hon Ms Bassett: What I would say, since you bring up the tax cuts, is that tax cuts have created the jobs that new Canadians come to this country to get. We have taken this step to make sure that people coming to this province have jobs in order to support their families.

One of the barriers they have told us they face is getting into professions. Through our 18 regulatory bodies we are moving forward so that they will look at people from different backgrounds and let them move forward into various training and skills they come here to work in.

We are also giving out fact sheets on the other side of the ocean so that when people come across they know what skills they need to have before they come here, and they can prepare, before they come, to learn the language, to have the skills, so that when they land here they'll be able to get a job. That's exactly what they are finding when they get here.

1420

SCHOOL SAFETY

Mr Rick Bartolucci (Sudbury): My question is to the Solicitor General. Last Thursday in the wake of the Taber high school and the Columbine High School tragedies, you advocated to the media and to the public of Ontario that every one of Ontario's 827 high schools should have an armed and uniformed police officer stationed within its premises. Norm Gardner, the chair of the Toronto Police Services Board, doesn't agree with you. In fact, your Premier, your leader, Mike Harris, doesn't agree with you. He said, "It's not Mike Harris's policy, nor is it the policy of the government." Solicitor General, can you please tell the people of Ontario, in light of the Premier's public chastizing of your stance, do you still support your suggestion to have a police officer in every one of Ontario's high schools?

Hon Robert W. Runciman (Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services): What the member says is quite inaccurate. What I indicated in my comments in a scrum was certainly misinterpreted by certain members of the media. We can provide transcripts if you're really and sincerely interested, which I suspect you are not.

What I indicated was my support for consideration by boards and municipalities across this province of what is already occurring in I think 18 to 20 municipalities in Ontario where various police services provide liaison officers to work within the school system. I indicated the example I recently had exposure to in Collingwood where the OPP has assigned an officer to work full-time in the school. I met with the principal, the vice-principal and the police officer. They are very enthusiastic about the impact it's having on the school body, the teachers, everyone working in that environment. It's been a very positive experience.

Mr Bartolucci: I think the people of Ontario know that answer was from a Solicitor General who last week stepped in a pile of doo-doo and is trying to get the same foot out of his mouth.

I think everyone knows that your suggestion last Thursday was politically motivated, rather than one that was sincere. If you and your government were sincere about tackling the problems of school violence, why did you cancel the violence prevention secretariat which was established in 1992? Why did you cancel the violence-free schools policy which was established in 1994? Why did you cut the funding and eliminate all programs to stop violence in the high schools of Ontario in 1995? Finally, Solicitor General, do you suggest for a second that your way of treating school violence is the right way for Ontario high schools?

Hon Mr Runciman: I don't think this government has to take any lectures from the Liberal Party in terms of concern about public safety. No government in the history of this province, and I believe in the history of this country, has done more to improve public safety than the Mike Harris government.

You talk about the youth in terms of people who are having trouble. We've made the initiatives through our strict discipline facility, Project Turnaround. We are dealing with young offenders' problems and we are going to turn these young people around.

I expressed my support for liaison officers in the school system in Ontario and I continue to strongly support that. I am surprised that a former educator would be opposed to that.

Look at the Alberta situation where a liaison officer was in that school, intervened and was able to put down that young man and stop a very, very much more serious situation. There could have been many more deaths if that officer hadn't —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you.

HIGHWAY 17

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): I want to take the opportunity on what may be my last day in this place after almost 24 years and address a question to the Minister of Transportation on an issue that has been ongoing in our area longer than I've been a member of this place.

The minister will know there is growing frustration in the communities of Sault Ste Marie and the smaller communities of Algoma district east of the city, as well as in the Garden River First Nation, about the length of time it's taking to finally begin the four-laning of Highway 17 east of Sault Ste Marie.

The minister will know that an agreement was reached in the early 1990s, after about 22 years of on and off negotiations, for the transfer of the right of way from the First Nation reserve to the provincial government to allow for the construction of a four-lane Highway 17 to Sault Ste Marie. Since that time construction has not begun and we hear very serious rumours in the community that there may be demonstrations and perhaps even a

blockage of traffic on the Trans-Canada Highway unless this project proceeds soon.

Can the minister tell us when he anticipates the project to proceed and what action will be taken —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): The Minister of Transportation.

Hon David Turnbull (Minister without Portfolio): Your government promised \$100 million to four-lane the northern parts of the Trans-Canada Highway and spent \$4 million.

The Speaker: Thanks. I'm fairly certain you're not the Minister of Transportation. I do recall when you were critic for the Minister of Transportation.

The Minister of Transportation.

Hon Tony Clement (Minister of Transportation): As I was saying before I was rudely interrupted, it is actually an honour to have a question from the honourable member, whom I have respected for my four short years in this House.

Mr Gilles Pouliot (Lake Nipigon): When are you going to build the highway?

Hon Mr Clement: OK, I'm getting to that. I just thought I'd warm up to it a little bit.

1430

As the honourable member has explained to this House, the issue of Highway 17 through Garden River has been one that I suppose connects me as Minister of Transportation with a healthy line of ministers of transportation all the way back to John Rhodes. I say that without any degree of satisfaction with that result. That's actually something not to be proud of at all.

I travelled the route last year. I know the route quite well. I can share with this House, as the honourable member knows, that there is a unique situation. We wish to tender the contract in a particular way that would involve the First Nation with that contract, which means that it takes a little bit more time to do that, and to do it in a way that is both fair to the taxpayers of Ontario and open to account to the taxpayers of Ontario, but also is able to allow the First Nation on that piece of property an opportunity.

Certainly it is my intention to move as quickly as possible, and if the honourable member has any suggestions on how to avoid a situation that we both want to avoid, I'd be happy to have —

The Speaker: Supplementary.

Mr Wildman: To the minister, the member for York Mills obviously doesn't know the history of this. As the minister has indicated, going right back to the Honourable John Rhodes, a well-respected member of this House and a member from Sault Ste Marie, there have been attempts to get an agreement to resolve this.

The minister knows that in 1994 we did reach agreement and that there was finally an agreement to transfer the land. Since that time there has been haggling between the Ministry of Transportation and the First Nation and their construction firm over the cost of the contract, and nothing has happened.

Frustration is growing both in the non-native community and in the aboriginal community. As the minister has alluded to, there is some rumour that there may be direct action taken because of that frustration that could lead to a serious confrontation. We all want to avoid that. I would encourage the minister to act quickly to resolve the cost question. I would be pleased to assist in averting any kind of difficult situation, if that's possible.

Having said that, can the minister indicate when he expects to have the matter over the cost of the contract resolved so that the contract can proceed, construction can proceed, and we can avoid any disruptions of traffic that would harm relationships in the area and cause serious problems?

Hon Mr Clement: I thank the honourable member for the second part of the question. The honourable member has raised in this House something that we conferred about privately, I believe it was last week. He has made what I believe to be a good-faith offer to assist this government to see whether there is a way to get to where we both want to go, which is the contract finalized and the road built.

I want to say publicly that I am happy to take him up on his offer. I will be proceeding expeditiously in directing my staff to proceed expeditiously with you and your staff in order to get this issue resolved. You've got my full commitment on that.

WATER SUPPLY

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. I'm asking this question not only on my behalf —

Interjections.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Order. I'm interested in hearing the member for Grey-Owen Sound's question.

Mr Murdoch: As I was saying, I'm not only asking this question for myself but also for Jim Wilson and David Tilson.

Grey county is the home of southern Ontario's best streams and rivers. As a result, it is coming under increasing pressure from companies looking for sources of good water for bottling, export and sale to the public.

Control of water-taking lies with the Minister of the Environment. A permit is required for taking more than 50,000 litres per day for any use other than domestic livestock watering or fire control.

However, Grey county was hard hit this past summer by drought conditions. As a result of the drought conditions, I have resolutions here from Grey county council, Artemesia township council, Proton, and the Grey County Federation of Agriculture asking for a moratorium on water-taking permits until the effects of the drought can be assessed and water levels returned to pre-drought levels.

Minister, will you put a moratorium on all new and expanded water-taking permits in Grey county?

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): We are having a significant climate change in Ontario, as witnessed by the fact that Lake Superior is down in water level by some two feet and Lake Ontario is probably down by two and a half feet. It's a very serious problem that we're facing here in Ontario and in North America. We had a significant problem last summer in Grey county, and in southwestern Ontario in particular, with regard to the amount of rainfall that we had last year.

This morning I met with Ted Chudleigh and Dave Tilson and some people with regard to Peel county and some of the problems the farmers are having in that area with regard to watering their livestock.

In view of this situation, I have asked the ministry directors to curtail the issuance of the permit to take water based on the cumulative effects on environment and ecosystem.

Mr Murdoch: Thank you, Minister. I can take that as a yes, you will? I appreciate that.

I'd like to mention that Barb Fisher and Helen Johns both have been working hard in Bruce county. If I can obtain a similar resolution from the county of Bruce, would you put a moratorium on the water-taking in Bruce county too?

Hon Mr Sterling: The answer is yes for Bruce county. The answer is yes for Huron county. The answer is yes for Middlesex county. In fact, the answer is yes for all of southwestern Ontario, over to the east in terms of Lennox and Addington, and we will consider other areas of the province that are under this huge amount of duress in terms of the ability of farmers and communities to get adequate groundwater supply.

LONG-TERM CARE

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): My question is to the Minister of Health. Last week my colleague from Windsor-Sandwich asked the Minister of Long-Term Care and minister responsible for seniors a question that relates to the Windsor-Essex Community Care Access Centre. Since he didn't answer that question, I thought I would go to his boss today.

This question we had was with regard to an audit report. This audit report has been sitting on someone's desk for almost two years. It's one of the most damning reports I've read. We have a copy of that report, and yet it hasn't been released to the public, notwithstanding the fact that the minister promised the member for Windsor-Sandwich and me that it would be.

Minister, would you use your influence and authority to have this report released?

Hon Elizabeth Witmer (Minister of Health): I'll pass that to the Minister of Long-Term Care and seniors.

Hon Cameron Jackson (Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors): I'd like to thank the member opposite for the question. I indicated in the House that this audit is not a secret. It will be shared with the member. He seems to have acquired his

own copy. I indicated that the law in this province is very clear, and until the individuals named in this report have given permission to the privacy commissioner to have their names released, those matters had to be done in accordance with Ontario law. As a minister, I will continue to uphold the law.

1440

Mr Crozier: You've made us go through a freedom of information on this. You quote the law, yet this report is of interest with regard to accountability to the people of Ontario.

This report says in its findings what the major observations are and it lists a number of them. The concerns are with the long-term-care division of the southwest regional office as well as the ministry. It talks about questionable use of resources; needs to conduct a review; inadequate segregation of duties, roles and responsibilities; enhance accountability, monitoring both cash flow and expenses; ensure that agreements are approved on a timely basis; and control over payments was inadequate.

Minister, I don't think you should stall. What the people of Ontario want to know is, are they getting service, are they getting the right service, are they getting a bang for their buck? I wish you'd release this report.

Hon Mr Jackson: I want to assure the member opposite that the Mike Harris government expanded long-term-care services in this province by \$300 million, and the good residents of Windsor and Essex county have enjoyed the benefits of expanded access to those services. In the process of expanding these services, we have made the process of delivering long-term-care services, community based services, more accountable by, for the first time in Ontario's history, having publicly elected local residents directing the care through community care access centres.

I want to assure the member, as I did his colleague last week, that the additional dollars invested to service in the Windsor and Essex area were spent on expanded service to the residents of that community, and we'll continue to expand it — services that we've committed to do.

I want to remind the member opposite that his government, his own campaign platform, indicates that you're going to spend \$540 million. We've committed to \$870 million.

INCINERATION

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): My question is to the Minister of the Environment. The region of Hamilton-Wentworth has come up with a plan to increase the tonnage of garbage that runs throughout our aging regional incinerator, Swaru, by 40%. That's going to increase dioxin emissions by 50%. Swaru is already the largest producer of dioxins in Ontario, and I don't have to remind you that dioxin is one of the worst cancer-causing substances known. Here we have a cash-strapped region, as a result of your cuts, looking for ways to save money and willing to make our incinerator one of the biggest municipal producers of dioxin in Canada.

This is an incredibly terrible step backwards. You know it, I know it, the people of Hamilton know it and those who know about the health of the people of Hamilton know it.

Minister, I want to know if you are prepared to finally show some environmental leadership in this province and communicate with the region of Hamilton-Wentworth and advise them that it is your opinion and that of your government that this is the wrong thing to do for the people of Hamilton.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I understand that they have not made a decision with regard to this matter. I will consider it when they have made that decision.

Mr Christopherson: Minister, that's not good enough. I'm asking you to have some input now. They're making the decision. To the best of my knowledge, they're making that decision at a council meeting this evening. The fact is, it's all over the newspaper: "Garbage Burning Plan a Hot Issue." Of course, where are you when there's a hot issue in our town? "Incinerator Plan Pumps up Dioxins." Don't tell me you want to sit around and wait. This has been caused because you cut back on transfer payments to municipalities. We are \$36 million short every year as a result of your downloading, and now our local council is forced to consider things like this that are short-term dollar savings but long-term bad for the health and welfare of the people of this community.

You, Minister, have an obligation to advise them that you're opposed to this and that it's not in the best interests of the environment, that it's not in the best interests of the health of the people of Hamilton-Wentworth. Will you rise to the responsibility of the job you have, finally, and show some environmental leadership?

Hon Mr Sterling: It is not my responsibility to intervene in the council's decision for tonight. We have some of the strictest incineration limits in North America in terms of any kind of incineration that takes place in this province. They will be put to the test, they will follow our laws and they will be required to meet these stringent tests if in fact they make this decision.

I am not going to pre-empt what a municipal council does. Perhaps the NDP wants to take over what municipal governments do. We don't.

EDUCATION REFORM

Mr Joseph Spina (Brampton North): This question is for the Minister of Education. Minister, you recently announced something called a Charter of Education Rights and Responsibilities. Would you be kind enough to explain that particular process to me, please, for my constituents?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I thank the member for Brampton North. I know the member for Brampton North is in full support of improving the quality of education in our Ontario schools. I'm pleased to say that the education charter of

rights and responsibilities, along with the new curriculum, the province-wide testing, the standardized report cards, is a plank in terms of improving that quality of education, because it contains rights for students: for example, the right to a publicly funded elementary and secondary education, the right to a safe learning environment, the right to the highest-quality education we can provide. On the other hand, it contains responsibilities: in the case of students, the responsibility to respect themselves, their fellow students and their teachers.

Interjection.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Member for Ottawa West, come to order.

Hon David Johnson: Parents are important. Parents have the right to know how their child is progressing and how their school is progressing, but they also have the responsibility to be actively involved in supporting the education system.

Mr Spina: Minister, I think you mentioned a component there briefly that dealt with teachers. Can you help me understand how this will improve their ability to teach our students, since they are our most critical asset in this province?

Hon David Johnson: As we all know, we have some of the finest teachers in the world right here in Ontario. These very fine teachers also have rights and need to be supported. They have the right, as we see it, to maintain order and discipline within the classroom, and the charter will assist them in that regard, in maintaining that order and that discipline. That's of course so that our students can learn and the teachers can teach in an orderly fashion. Teachers also have responsibilities. They have responsibility to keep their skills and their training up to date so we, through the charter, will institute every three to five years a testing procedure to ensure —

The Speaker: New question, member for Parkdale.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Tony Ruprecht (Parkdale): I have a question for the Minister of Education. Your original funding formula, which you pushed down the throats of parents in Toronto, did not take into account the fact that our schools are really the heart of our community and serve to provide special programs, such as parenting programs, parks and recreation programs, ESL, adult education, daycare centres and a host of other programs. Are you prepared today to review the funding formula for our schools so that you don't inadvertently rip the heart out of our community by closing these schools?

Hon David Johnson (Minister of Education and Training): I will assure the member opposite that over \$15 billion will be spent this year for all sorts of school programs in Ontario. Further, we have guaranteed that next year no school board will receive fewer operating funds than they have this year.

I guess the question is, how do we fund that? Through the strong leadership of the Premier and this party, we know we'll have a strong economy, and based on that

strong economy, the revenues will be there to fund our school system in Ontario, to ensure the highest-quality programs within the classrooms and to ensure that the accommodation is built for students, in contrast with the Liberal Party, which has indicated that it will hike property taxes by up to 10%, \$1.3 billion on the backs of —

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Thank you. Supplementary.

1450

Mr Ruprecht: You think you're pretty smart in answering this question, which you really didn't. I'll tell you this —

Interjections.

The Speaker: I just want to caution the member to be parliamentary.

Mr Ruprecht: Minister, your answer does not help the hundreds of parents in the riding of Davenport whose schools are to be closed, such as Earls Court Public School, Heydon Park and Hughes Public School. You had promised a number of school boards across Ontario to review this funding formula, but you have not delivered — zilch, nada, nothing. Until you keep your promise, are you prepared to take the advice of our leader, the Liberal leader, Dalton McGuinty, to provide —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order.

Mr Ruprecht: Let me tell you something: We'll see who's got the last laugh pretty soon.

Back to the education question —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Stop the clock.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Pardon? I think you're debating someone else.

Member for Parkdale.

Mr Ruprecht: Minister, until you keep your promise to not only the parents but the school boards across Ontario, will you not take the advice of the Liberal leader, Dalton McGuinty, and provide sufficient funding until you call the election —

Interjections.

The Speaker: Hold on. You know, we're going to get this question in.

Interjection.

The Speaker: I appreciate that the member for Ottawa West has a question. There has been a lot of heckling and he may not get it. That happens in this place, and I'm sure the member for Ottawa West understands that. The question is going to be put. I want the member for Parkdale to have his opportunity to put the question.

Mr Ruprecht: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I'm just telling you this in terms of my question: You keep on laughing at this, but we'll find out whether you're right or the Liberal leader, Dalton McGuinty, is right. Are you prepared to listen to the advice of my Liberal leader, Dalton McGuinty, and provide enough funding for these schools until you have the guts to call this election, and call it soon?

Hon David Johnson: I'd be happy to accept the advice of John Manley, who says that taxes must be reduced. Apparently Dalton McGuinty's advice is to put \$1.3 billion on the backs of property taxpayers in the province of Ontario. I will not accept that.

Even on an issue such as providing 2,000 computers to schools — four or five computers, it says here in Dalton McGuinty's plan, but there are 5,000 schools in the province. You're going to provide less than half a computer to every school. I can hardly accept that sort of advice.

What we have done is provide over \$200 million more funding to schools, over \$60 million here in Toronto, and that money will come through a booming economy —

The Speaker: Thank you.

MEMBER FOR ALGOMA

Hon Margaret Marland (Minister without Portfolio [children's issues]): On a point of order, Mr Speaker: I'm aware of the fact that we have two deans remaining in this House at this time and that one of them, the member for Algoma, is retiring. Since he has been a member of this place for 24 years, I think it would be very remiss of all of us not to use an opportunity, although I recognize it's not a legal opportunity on my part, to pay our respects and best wishes to the member for Algoma.

I know that those of us who have been colleagues for some of his 24 years will indeed miss his good humour, his dignified debate and his strong ability to actually put behind the rancour of partisan activity in this place and maintain a relationship with all of us, colleagues of all parties.

If I may, Mr Speaker, wish a happy and healthy retirement to Bud Wildman.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): On the point of order, you can respond today or tomorrow; it's up to you.

Mr Bud Wildman (Algoma): Mr Speaker, I want to thank my friend opposite for her kind remarks. After hearing her compliments and everything, I've changed my mind.

I really do appreciate her kind remarks. As Adlai Stevenson said, "Flattery is fine, as long as you don't inhale." Since there have been so many questions about inhaling in the last few weeks around this place, I want to assure you that I did not inhale.

I have very much appreciated the relationships I've had with other members of this House on all sides of the aisle over the last 23½ years, along with my friend from Renfrew North, with whom I share the longest time serving in this House. He is running again, and I wish him well — not too well, of course.

At any rate, I do appreciate the fact that I've had the opportunity to serve the people of Ontario and Algoma both in opposition and in government over many years. I've appreciated their support and friendship. I've also appreciated the relationships I've developed with many members of the House.

It's my experience that despite the low esteem that sometimes is given to politicians in our society, members of whatever political stripe may have significant differences of opinion but they are all dedicated to what is best for their constituents and for the people of this province. It's been a privilege for me to be able to serve with you all.

I really value this place. I think unfortunately some members do not see the importance of legislative debate as they might. I would hope that is not the case. But I really do enjoy this place and I have enjoyed my time here. I thank you very much for acknowledging that I am not going to be seeking re-election. Thank you all very much.

The Speaker: I will be certain that copies of Hansard are sent to your family.

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PETITIONS

DRIVER EXAMINATION CENTRES

Mr Bruce Crozier (Essex South): I have a number of petitions here, over 7,000, that were put together with the work of Joseph and Betty Jabbour.

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas the Ontario government has a duty and responsibility to provide driver exam centres across the province;

"Whereas the Ministry of Transportation closed the Leamington driver exam centre on October 25, 1996, forcing persons and local driver training schools to travel over 50 kilometres in order to obtain a driver exam;

"Whereas this has presented hardships for the senior population;

"Whereas students are losing time from school in order to travel to a driver exam centre;

"Be it therefore resolved that we, the undersigned, ask the Ministry of Transportation to reconsider and reopen a driver examination centre to serve the population in the Leamington area."

I join 7,917 constituents in signing this application and put my signature to it in support.

ADOPTION

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): I have a petition here to the Legislature of Ontario. I am going to summarize the "whereases" and go directly to the direction of the petition. It deals with adoption reform.

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislature of Ontario to enact revision of the Child and Family Services Act and other acts to:

"Permit unrestricted access to full personal identifying birth information to adopted persons and adult children of adopted persons, unrestricted access to amended birth certificates to birth parents, birth grandparents, siblings

and other birth relatives, where the adopted person has reached age 18;

"Permit unrestricted access to identifying information to adoptive parents of minor children, emancipated minor adoptees and individuals with legal guardianship for an adopted person in special circumstances;

"Allow adopted persons and birth relatives to file a notice stating their wish for no contact;

"Replace mandatory reunion counselling with optional counselling;

"Permit access to agency and court files when original statistical information is insufficient for identification of and contact with birth relatives;

"Recognize open adoptions in the legislation."

I am proud to support this and affix my signature to it.

RECYCLING

Mr Carl DeFaria (Mississauga East): I have a petition organized by a campaign by students of Saints Peter and Paul school in Mississauga asking the government to reintroduce refillable bottles in a deposit return system in Ontario. It reads:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"Whereas we believe that reusing makes more environmental and economical sense than recycling;

"Whereas we want to leave a healthy and clean environment for our children;

"Whereas the deposit return system would help reduce the amount of garbage that ends up in our landfills and in our environment;

"We, therefore, petition the enforcement of regulations 340 and 357 and the enforcement of legislation for refillable bottles."

This petition is signed by hundreds and hundreds of people whom the students have approached in our Mississauga East riding. I am pleased to affix my signature to it.

HOME CARE

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I'm pleased to present to the Legislature this afternoon a petition prepared by Mrs Donna Reimer of Barry's Bay and signed by 352 people of the west Renfrew area of my constituency. The petition reads in part:

"To the Legislative Assembly of Ontario:

"We, the undersigned, draw to your attention our growing concern about the impact of cuts in home care and home support and the very negative impact that these cuts are having to quality health care in the Barry's Bay area of west Renfrew county."

I am pleased to affix my signature to this petition, which clearly speaks to a very serious and real need of seniors in my part of eastern Ontario.

FIRE IN HAMILTON

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"Two years ago, Hamilton was the site of one of the worst environmental disasters in Ontario; and

"Whereas the Plastimet fire raged for three days in a residential area of Hamilton, releasing furans, large quantities of heavy metals and other dangerous chemicals and consuming 400 tonnes of plastic, including polyvinyl chloride, PVC, which releases extremely toxic substances, such as dioxins, which are thought to cause cancer and disruptions to endocrine systems; and

"Whereas the city of Hamilton declared a state of emergency and a one-day evacuation of area residents because of fears about airborne toxins; and

"Whereas the government has cut funding to the Ministry of the Environment by more than 35% and laid off more than 750 people who used to work to protect the environment; and

"Whereas we urgently need a public inquiry to find whether these cuts played a role in causing the Plastimet fire, whether the evacuation process was adequate, if residents and workers received adequate warning of the danger, are there ways to improve responses to these life-threatening fires and how to prevent the nightmare of other Plastimet fires in all our communities; and

"Whereas for the past two years the Harris Conservative government has steadfastly refused to hold such a public inquiry or listen to municipalities, labour organizations, environmental groups and firefighter organizations, who have all urged the government to hold a public inquiry; and

"Whereas the Harris Conservative government has allowed corporate polluters like Plastimet to operate with virtual impunity in a climate of deregulation or industry self-regulation, along with cuts to monitoring and enforcement mechanisms;

"Therefore we, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to put the safety and health of the people of Hamilton before the interests of corporate polluters and immediately hold a public inquiry into the Plastimet fire."

I continue to support my constituents who want this public inquiry.

EDUCATION FUNDING

Mr Bruce Smith (Middlesex): "Whereas this government has undertaken to reform the system of education funding to ensure fair funding for all Ontario students; and

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has stated that the province could, if it so chose, pass legislation extending funding to denominational schools other than Roman Catholic schools without infringing the rights guaranteed Roman Catholic separate schools; and

"Whereas providing our children with an excellent education consistent with our cultural and religious beliefs is a necessity and not a matter of preference; and

"Whereas independent schools successfully educate children across the entire spectrum of learning abilities and special needs; and

"Whereas all children of taxpaying Ontario parents deserve to have funding distributed in a manner that does not discriminate against those not using the public Catholic systems;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, respectfully request that the government take immediate steps to extend fair funding to all students of the province."

Mr Monte Kwinter (Wilson Heights): I have a petition that states:

"Whereas the government of Ontario and all political parties represented in the Legislature strongly believe in a tolerant society in which religious and cultural differences are respected and services are provided without discrimination, as reflected in section 1 of the Human Rights Code;

"Whereas this government has undertaken to reform the system of education funding to ensure 'fair funding' for the education of Ontario's children;

"Whereas the Supreme Court of Canada has confirmed that the province of Ontario has the power to extend funding to denominational schools;

"Whereas five other provinces — BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec — provide public funding to denominational schools;

"Whereas Catholic parents in Ontario enjoy the right to educate their children in an education system" run by their community "consistent with Catholic values and fully supported by their education tax dollars;

"Whereas our education tax dollars are already used to support special education programs based on ethnicity, sexual orientation, as well as popular French immersion programs, without posing a threat to mainstream public education;

"Whereas experience shows that a system that in effect forces religious and cultural minority parents to educate their children in a secular school system threatens the continuity of many of these communities;

"Whereas providing our children with an appropriate education in a context consistent with our cultural and religious values is a necessity and not a matter of preference;

"Whereas denominational schools successfully educate children who are overwhelmingly from low- and middle-income Canadian families and representing the entire spectrum of learning ability and special needs;

"Whereas all parents in Ontario paying taxes for education deserve to have that funding distributed in a manner that does not discriminate against those who for conscientious reasons are unable to use the secular public education system;

"Therefore we, the undersigned citizens and taxpayers of Ontario, respectfully request that the Legislature and

the government take immediate steps to extend equitable funding to denominational schools."

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): "Whereas the government of Ontario has imposed a politically motivated funding formula that will force the closure of hundreds of schools across Ontario;

"Whereas the only reason for the funding formula is to justify removing more than \$1 billion from the education system so that the wealthiest Ontarians can get a tax break;

"Whereas the schools are the heart of our communities and to close schools would be to cut out the heart of our communities;

"Whereas a properly funded, quality education system is critical to the well-being of the children of this province and the future of the province itself;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"That the government of Ontario scrap the funding formula and save our schools by properly funding public education, starting with the return of more than \$1 billion taken out of education by the government of Ontario."

I affix my signature to this.

SCHOOL CLOSURES

Mr David Tilson (Dufferin-Peel): I have a petition which I would like to read on behalf of the member for Wellington and myself. It's addressed to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the Upper Grand District School Board has identified nine schools to be closed in their district, one of them being Arthur District High School; and

"Whereas the Upper Grand District School Board has not satisfied the stakeholders in Arthur District High School of the educational or financial benefits of closing the school;

"We, the undersigned, petition the government of Ontario to stop the closure of this school immediately."

I have signed this petition.

PORNOGRAPHY

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): I also have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas children are exposed to pornography in variety stores and video retail outlets;

"Whereas bylaws vary from city to city and have failed to protect minors from unwanted exposure to pornography;

"We, the undersigned, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario as follows:

"To enact legislation which will create uniform standards in Ontario to prevent minors from being exposed to pornography in retail establishments; prevent minors from entering establishments which rent or sell pornography; restrict the location of such establishments to non-residential areas."

That's signed by 150 constituents in my riding.

PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

Mr David Christopherson (Hamilton Centre): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. It reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned citizens of Hamilton and the surrounding areas, beg leave to petition the government of Ontario as follows:

"Whereas the Health Services Restructuring Commission has announced the closure of the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital; and

"Whereas the government of Ontario, through the Health Services Restructuring Commission, is divesting its responsibility for mental health care without any consultation with the people of Hamilton-Wentworth; and

"Whereas the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital has a reputation for excellence and is a leader in providing mental health care services and many unique programs; and

"Whereas in 1998 the American Psychiatric Association awarded their gold medal to the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital for its program on mood disorders; and

"Whereas both city and regional councils oppose the closure and more than 30,000 people have signed petitions to date opposing the hospital's closure; and

"Whereas the people of Hamilton-Wentworth will pay the price when the Harris government shuts down the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital;

"Therefore we, the people of Hamilton-Wentworth who care about quality, accessibility and a publicly accountable mental health care system, petition the Legislative Assembly of Ontario to keep the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital site open and deliver the services and programs from that location," just as Howard Hampton promised to do yesterday.

EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTES

Mr John L. Parker (York East): I have a petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

"Whereas the government of Ontario has identified quality education as a priority public policy;

"Whereas a number of education reforms have been introduced in the province of Ontario to improve the quality of education;

"Whereas ultimately the quality of education depends on the quality of teaching in the classroom;

"Whereas in recent years students, teachers and parents have been subjected to the inconvenience and hardships resulting from the withholding of services in education-related labour disputes;

"Whereas students, teachers and parents would all benefit from a consistent and uninterrupted school year; and

"Whereas Mr Frank Klees, MPP for York-Mackenzie, has introduced a resolution to address this issue;

"Therefore we, the undersigned residents of Ontario, petition the government of Ontario to establish a task force consisting of representatives of all of the stake-

holders in the education system, such task force to have as its objectives to find, through consultation with the stakeholders, a mechanism for resolving labour disputes in the education system that would avoid disruption of services."

HEALTH CARE

Mr James J. Bradley (St Catharines): "Whereas St Catharines and the Niagara region are in urgent need of family physicians and medical specialists;

"Whereas patients are required to utilize the emergency departments of hospitals in Niagara rather than visiting their own family doctor, or use the services of walk-in clinics at all times;

"Therefore be it resolved that the Minister of Health declare Niagara an underserved area as it relates to the availability of family physicians and medical specialists, and that the government of Ontario take all steps necessary to ensure that the medical needs of the Niagara region are met, including the availability of members of the medical profession to serve Niagara residents."

I affix my signature as I am in complete agreement with this petition.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I seek unanimous consent of the House that we now suspend the proceedings until 4 o'clock, at which time the budget will be presented.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Is there unanimous consent to suspend the proceedings till 4? Agreed.

There'll be a five-minute bell at 3:55 pm to call the members into the House.

This House stands recessed until 4 pm.

The House recessed from 1515 to 1600.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

1999 ONTARIO BUDGET

Hon Ernie L. Eves (Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance): I move, seconded by Mr Harris, that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): I ask the indulgence of the House for the pages to the deliver the budget. Do all members have a budget? Minister of Finance.

Hon Mr Eves: Four years ago I stood in this House and told the people of Ontario that our province could do better — much better. I told them we must do better if we were to stimulate economic growth, create jobs and protect the services important to all Ontarians.

At that time I promised Ontarians that our government was committed to rebuilding Ontario. I reminded them that this would not be an easy task.

In the wake of a decade of successive governments taxing and spending freely, hundreds of thousands of Ontarians were without work.

Taxes were hiked 65 times.

The welfare rolls were jammed with 1.3 million people who simply wanted and, quite frankly, deserved opportunity and the dignity of a job.

The situation was so bad that more jobs were lost in Ontario between 1990 and 1995 than at any other time in the province's history since the Great Depression.

A deficit of \$11.3 billion meant that the government was spending \$1 million an hour more than it was taking in in revenue.

The entire foundation of our growth had been eroded.

Our government promised to rebuild that foundation. We promised a plan to strengthen the economy of the province and make it a better place for all Ontarians and their families.

Unlike our predecessors, we knew that tax cuts create a strong economy.

A strong economy builds better communities.

A strong economy allows us to invest in children's early years.

A strong economy leads to an innovative culture.

A strong economy supports a skilled workforce.

A strong economy provides for quality education and lifelong learning.

A strong economy allows us to strengthen health care and helps us to build the foundations for prosperity so that every family, every person in this province, can have a better tomorrow.

Building a strong economy takes vision and leadership. The leadership Premier Harris has shown over the past four years has clearly put Ontario back on the right track.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank not only my good friend and colleague the Premier but also all members of the Legislature and Ontario citizens who provided their ideas and input throughout the past four years.

The most recent budget consultation process was again both stimulating and enlightening for me, and it would not have been possible without the dedication of the deputy minister, Byrne Purchase, and my chief of staff, Steve Pengelly, with the entire team at the Ministry of Finance.

Since we began our program of tax cuts and focused reinvestment, Ontario has experienced continual economic growth, with a consistent record of outperforming the other economies in Canada and throughout the world.

In 1998 alone the Ontario economy expanded by 4.2%, doubling the rate of 2.1% for the rest of Canada. The economy grew faster than any of the G7 nations, including the United States of America and Germany.

Retail sales grew by 6.9% last year, more than four times the increase in retail sales in the rest of the country. Consumer spending rose almost 5% in 1998, the strongest gain in over a decade.

Ontario has become one of the world's greatest trading jurisdictions. Today, Ontario has the highest exports as a share of GDP of any Canadian province or any G7 country, including Japan and France. In 1998, Ontario merchandise exports increased over 11%, twice the rate for the rest of Canada. Automobile parts manufacturers shipped record volumes.

Recent private-sector forecasts predict that economic growth will remain strong this year. The average forecast is 3.8% real economic growth for Ontario in 1999, while the Canadian economy is forecast to grow by 2.8%. Ontario is again forecast to continue to grow faster than any G7 country.

What does this mean for individuals and communities across Ontario?

It means hundreds of construction cranes in communities across Ontario. It means thousands of new homes being built. It means hundreds of thousands more jobs. It means millions of Ontario families keeping more of their hard-earned money through tax cuts.

Since the throne speech in September 1995, the Ontario economy has added 539,000 net new jobs. The 200,000 new jobs created in 1998 alone represent the largest annual increase in net new jobs ever recorded for the province of Ontario, or any other Canadian province for that matter.

More than 96% of those jobs were full-time. In the last seven months alone, 205,000 new full-time jobs have been created in our province.

Just last week, last Monday, the Conference Board of Canada estimated that Ontario will have surpassed the government's ambitious 725,000-job target by the first quarter of the year 2000, over one year, some full 15 months, ahead of schedule. By the end of the year 2000, the Conference Board estimates that the economy will have created 866,000 jobs, far surpassing the 725,000 predicted and ridiculed by members of the opposition. This is why I am confident that the economy will create another 825,000 jobs over the next five years.

Those jobs are being created all across this province: more jobs in high-tech industries; more jobs in the automotive industry, in the construction industry and in financial services; more jobs in tourism.

In the last four years, 374,000 Ontarians have been given the opportunity to break the cycle of welfare dependency. Through the new mandatory work-for-welfare program, people are acquiring skills and the confidence necessary to take advantage of the opportunities that Ontario offers to them and to their families.

As heartened as we are by the success of the past four years, we cannot and must not take for granted that it will automatically continue.

We live in a highly competitive world where there are fewer boundaries — geographic or technological — to restrict business to just one place.

Achieving more jobs, more growth and a stronger economy in this environment continues to be an uphill battle. In the words of Premier Harris: "If the road we're

travelling is uphill, we cannot coast. We either keep moving forward or we risk sliding back."

The people of Ontario cannot afford to take that risk.

History has proven that when taxes go up, as they did from 1985 to 1995, and governments take more of taxpayers' and their families' hard-earned money, it leaves them with less money to spend and invest.

High taxes kill jobs, they stifle prosperity and they threaten the government's ability to support the programs that Ontario families value most.

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Tax cuts are the basis for a strong economy. Tax cuts create jobs. Allowing Ontarians to keep more of their own hard-earned money over the past four years has meant that they are spending and investing more, boosting our economy and creating jobs.

A growing economy means we have more money to reinvest in the things that mean the most to our families, like health care we can rely on, and quality education.

Now, there are those in this House who disagree with that. There are those who criticize our tax cuts. There are those who said very loudly that tax cuts would actually stifle economic growth, that it would decrease government revenues, leaving government with less money to spend on those important programs.

There are even those in this House who said tax cuts would cut government revenues by \$5 billion a year. As Winston Churchill said, "I do not resent the criticism, even when, for the sake of emphasis, it parts for the time with reality."

The reality is that with more people working, taxation revenues have gone up by over \$6 billion a year, even as rates went down. I would point out to the honourable members opposite that that's an \$11-billion-a-year miscalculation on their part.

Perhaps some people can afford to make an \$11-billion-a-year mistake, but on this side of the House, we cannot. We have the responsibility to take the necessary actions to build foundations for prosperity so that all Ontarians can have a better life.

Between 1985 and 1995, governments increased taxes 65 times. We saw where that led. Those tax increases led to high deficits, job loss and the highest percentage of people in Canada on welfare. That was their record.

Since taking office in 1995, we have cut taxes for Ontario families and businesses a total of 69 times, and today I am pleased to announce an additional 30 tax cuts. That brings to 99 the number of tax cuts we are delivering to the people of the province of Ontario — 99 cuts, so you know who my hero is, Mr Speaker: Wayne Gretzky.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Come to order, please. Member for Hamilton East, come to order.

Hon Mr Eves: Wayne Gretzky may be the greatest hockey player ever, but Mike Harris is the superstar of tax cuts.

We believe that Ontarians deserve a break on their taxes and we know, as the more than half a million

people who have found work in the past four years know firsthand, that tax cuts create jobs.

Ontario's businesses are the engines of growth that drive our economy. Our government is committed to helping Ontario's businesses grow and create jobs.

We have taken significant action to help businesses across the province. We eliminated the employer health tax on the first \$400,000 of payroll. We followed with our plan to cut the small business corporate income tax rate in half by 2006, making it the lowest rate in Canada. We cut red tape. And these actions were just the beginning.

Today I am proposing more tax cuts and reductions in red tape to ensure businesses in Ontario can indeed grow and create jobs.

Legislation will be introduced to eliminate the capital tax for an additional 45,000 businesses and reduce it for over 15,000 others. We will eliminate the capital tax entirely for credit unions to increase their community financing role.

To support farmers, a key business sector, I am proposing that the temporary retail sales tax rebate for farm building materials be made permanent. Farmers will also be exempt permanently from sales tax on a much wider range of products purchased for use in farming activities.

Last year, the government introduced a plan to make property taxes fair across the province. We also introduced an eight-year, \$500-million plan to reduce business education tax.

The business community can rest assured that our government will ensure that all existing tax protection tools will be available to municipalities and that the current business tax limits will continue in effect each and every year until tax fairness is achieved.

I'm announcing the creation of a Business Tax Review Panel to examine the current Ontario personal, corporate and property tax systems for their impact on the capacity of business, both small and large, to create jobs.

We're going to level the playing field for newly constructed commercial and industrial properties. We're going to introduce a new, short-form corporation tax return for small corporations to comply more easily with tax filing. We are bringing forward a Charter of Taxpayer Rights, suggested by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, a commitment to administer tax laws with fairness, courtesy and common sense.

We are expanding the community banking role of credit unions by exempting them from capital tax. We are going to increase consultations with credit unions and small business on a guaranteed lending program, and we are going to reduce deposit insurance requirements for credit unions.

For the average family taxes are still too high. Our predecessors allowed education property taxes for residential properties to go up by 42% between 1985 and 1990 and 20% between 1990 and 1995. Those are the records of their governments.

Our government froze education property tax rates and we are now reducing them.

Today I am announcing the government's intention to cut the residential education tax rate by 20% over five years. For the typical owner of a single-family detached home, that means a cut of \$150. As a first step, the residential education tax rate will be reduced by 10%, retroactive to January 1 of this year. This will allow homeowners to keep \$250 million of their own money this year alone; \$500 million a year when fully implemented.

The land transfer tax refund program has already helped more than 42,000 people, most of them young families, buy a new home. I am proposing that this refund program be extended for another year for first-time buyers of newly constructed homes and that the maximum refund be increased to \$2,000, retroactive to April 1 of this year.

My daughter Natalie may not be entirely happy with this decision as she became the proud, first-time purchaser of a new home on March 31. However, it does confirm budget confidentiality.

From 1985 to 1995, governments hiked personal income taxes 11 times. Our government started cutting personal income taxes by delivering a 30% cut, and further cut personal income taxes by increasing basic personal exemptions.

Our tax cuts have made a big difference to Ontario families. For example, a couple with two children and a net income of \$60,000 from two earners will pay, when annualized, \$1,430 less in Ontario income tax. This family will have saved \$3,595 since we started cutting taxes.

Today I'm announcing that our government will cut income taxes again substantially. We are proposing to cut personal income taxes for Ontarians by an additional 20% over the next five years, starting July 1 of this year with a 5% reduction in Ontario's personal income tax rate to 38.5% of the basic federal tax.

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The same family with two children and a net family income of \$60,000 from two earners will save an additional \$625 a year from this reduction when fully implemented. Together with the 30% already introduced, this family will be better off by \$2,105 a year as a result of the personal income tax reductions introduced by this government.

To continue helping modest-income families, I am proposing to enrich the Ontario tax reduction program. Ontario income tax will be eliminated for another 30,000 Ontarians and further reduced for 555,000 more. This means that 1,205,000 Ontarians will benefit from this program, including the 650,000 people who must continue to pay federal income tax but will not pay a cent of Ontario income tax at all.

I am proposing that we establish an advisory panel to examine concerns that have recently been raised regarding the tax treatment of one-earner and two-earner fami-

lies in our system, and that we enrich the Ontario tax reduction program for those more modest incomes.

The tax cuts introduced by this government have helped us to create a strong economy, which in turn allows us to invest more in health care.

As Durhane Wong-Reiger, former president of the Canadian Hemophilia Society, has said: "I'm a strong social advocate in health care and have worked in education and I know we need resources and services. I also know that if we don't have a strong economy, we can't do any of that."

Ensuring that all Ontarians can rely on top-quality health care has required a modernization of our system to meet the needs of an aging and changing and growing population.

The job of creating a modern health care system has not been easy. But we are beginning to see the results, and we will continue to make the necessary investments to create a better system for today and tomorrow.

In 1995, we promised to maintain health care spending at \$17.4 billion. In fact, by the last fiscal year, we had increased health care operating funding to \$18.9 billion, by far the largest amount in the history of the province of Ontario. We will increase funding by another 20% over the next five years to \$22.7 billion, the highest level anywhere in Canadian history.

This record level of health care investment over the past four years has improved access to a broad range of integrated health care services that are available when people need them. Our reinvestments have resulted in improved cardiac care, cancer care, dialysis and MRIs, to name a few.

We are adding 20,000 new beds for seniors and expanded community services for people with continuing care needs and children with special needs. We are investing \$375 million to hire 10,000 more nurses over the next two years, for a total of 12,000 over three years. We will back all of this up with a Patients' Bill of Rights guaranteeing access to health services so all Ontarians will know what to expect when they arrive at a hospital or call on community-based care.

Premier Harris showed tremendous leadership on behalf of the people of this province as part of the campaign by Canada's premiers to recover the federal government's health care cuts. As a result of this effort, the federal government has started to restore some of the \$2.8 billion annually that it took from the people of Ontario. There are some over there who like that \$2.8-billion cut, but we on this side of the House do not. The new chapter in transfer payment history is a good first step, but it is only a first step.

Some are promising to spend only recovered federal money to improve health services. For the year 1999-2000, we will increase total health care spending by \$1.6 billion. Premier Mike Harris is not only putting back every cent of the \$945 million we have recovered from Ottawa straight into health care services but has added a further \$702 million in provincial funding.

Meeting Ontario's health care needs requires investments in improving and expanding health care infrastructure. Our strong economy is enabling these and other important investments in Ontario's infrastructure to be made.

A strong network of highways is vital to Ontarians' needs, but the information highway is also important, as is a responsive education system.

Our world is changing and so must our infrastructure.

In order to make these changes in a way that also responds to the priorities of the people of Ontario, the government is establishing a SuperBuild Growth Fund which will inject \$20 billion into Ontario's infrastructure over the next five years. The SuperBuild Growth Fund will challenge our partners in the public and private sector to identify and support priority projects. This way, we will make the right kinds of investment at the right times.

I am announcing an initial government investment of \$2.9 billion in the fund for this year. The fund will consolidate infrastructure spending currently scattered across the system. By consolidating infrastructure spending and emphasizing partnerships, we will focus on investments that are both strategic and innovative in universities and colleges, in health care, in roads and bridges, in transit, in the information highway, in the environment and in building communities across Ontario.

The Ontario Financial Review Commission will be reconvened to examine emerging accounting and reporting practices, including capital funding and financing.

Innovation is one of the key themes of the Ontario Jobs and Investment Board's report, *A Road Map to Prosperity*. Innovation does not mean just creating and using new technologies and it does not apply only to high-tech businesses. It means developing new ideas and seizing opportunities to ensure that Ontario remains competitive.

The challenge is for all Ontarians — individuals, businesses, communities, institutions, organizations and governments — to do their part. Our economic growth has enabled much to be accomplished already in fostering innovation in Ontario.

The Ontario business research institute tax credit announced in the 1997 budget continues to promote partnerships between business and Ontario post-secondary institutions. The Ontario R&D Challenge Fund has so far led to 43 partnerships between the private sector and research institutions, and over \$420 million has been committed to R&D projects under this fund.

The SuperBuild Growth Fund is allowing us to make further investments in important innovative projects. Today I'm pleased to announce initiatives that will foster innovation, build our communities and increase Ontario's competitive advantage, beginning with the creation of the Ontario Innovation Trust. This \$250-million trust will provide funding to Ontario universities, hospitals and colleges for labs, high-tech equipment and other research infrastructure.

Innovative businesses and the entrepreneurs who lead them will benefit from more tax cuts, better access to financing, and improved business supports.

We are extending the Ontario innovation tax credit to public corporations and companies with up to \$25 million of taxable capital.

We are further extending the Ontario computer animation and special effects tax credit to include freelance labour costs and giving similar treatment to the digital media tax credit.

We are going to change the Ontario Securities Commission — regulatory changes making small business financing simpler.

We are going to provide \$3 million to Ontario Exports Inc to help small businesses start exporting their products.

Ontario has one of the most talented and innovative workforces in the world. Without continued economic growth and private-public partnerships, however, we would be unable to equip the workers of today and tomorrow with the necessary skills to succeed in an ever-changing market.

So while there is simply more to be done to create employment opportunities for Ontario's youth, 80,000 new jobs — over 53% of all youth jobs in Canada since September 1995 — have been created here in the province of Ontario. But we must explore innovative ways of ensuring that Ontario's youth can take full advantage of the opportunities that exist for them right here at home. We are committed to doing that.

Ontario must continue to attract and retain talented knowledge workers to remain a world leader in high-tech industries. A proposed new Ontario research employee stock option credit will make the tax treatment of compensation offered by Ontario R&D companies more competitive with the treatment in the United States of America. Perhaps this initiative will encourage the federal government to finally take action on this important matter.

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The SuperBuild Growth Fund will provide nearly three quarters of a billion dollars — some \$742 million — this year alone for investments to build and modernize our universities and colleges.

With contributions from the private sector and other partners, this will increase dramatically.

Four of the many exciting proposals that we have received from our post-secondary partners, with a very significant share of private sector money, are a new centre for information technology at the University of Toronto, a centre for excellence in manufacturing at Durham College, a centre for environmental and information technologies at the University of Waterloo, and the McMaster engineering and science rehabilitation program.

The SuperBuild Growth Fund will also promote co-operation between community colleges and universities. This co-operation will include more collaborate pro-

gramming, innovative partnerships and easier movement between colleges and universities.

The province has also consulted with colleges and universities on ways to use existing facilities more efficiently, and will provide additional funding to assist them in doing so.

A \$23-million increase in base operating funding will help our post-secondary institutions accommodate more students this September.

In last year's budget, I announced a \$150-million access to opportunities program to "double the pipeline" of graduates in computer science and high-demand engineering. The program, which applied an innovative market test by requiring industry to match start-up costs, has been tremendously successful. Business response was beyond our expectations.

Today I am pleased to announce an expansion of the program with an additional \$78 million in provincial start-up funding. This will increase the number of ATOP spaces by 40%, from 17,000 new opportunities for students each year to 23,000 opportunities each year.

Through the strategic skills investment program, also launched in last year's budget, 19 of 25 of Ontario's community colleges have entered into new skills partnerships with industry in self-sustaining programs, totalling \$115 million. We will continue to invest \$100 million in this program over the next five years, which will leverage a total of \$500 million for strategic skills training.

The government is helping students and their families pay for the cost of post-secondary education and manage their debt load. The more than \$600 million being raised in the Ontario student opportunity trust fund will help 185,000 college and university students get an education over the next decade.

Starting in September 2000, the new Aiming for the Top tuition scholarships will help students who earn top marks but require financial assistance to attend college or university. At maturity, the government will be providing \$35 million to 10,000 students in awards of up to \$3,500 per year for four years. We challenge the private sector to provide matching funds to allow 20,000 students to benefit from this program.

The important investments I have just mentioned — for research infrastructure, capital expansion and improvements, enhancements in base operating funding, assistance for students in financial need, and targeted funding for innovative partnerships in high-demand areas — will help our post-secondary institutions provide a place for all qualified students graduating from high school now and in the future as the student population continues to grow.

We will be enhancing the co-operative education tax credit for leading-edge technology apprentices.

Just today, the federal and provincial governments reached an agreement on student loan programs to harmonize them by August 2000 to better meet the needs of about 200,000 students and limit student debt.

More women will be apprenticing in the skilled trades in the automotive industry.

The women's Partners for Change Network has been expanded to include more cities, and women's community employment centres funding has been increased.

The best way to ensure that our young people can take advantage of opportunities in Ontario is to provide them with the best education possible, with courses that reflect today's reality and keep pace with an ever-changing world.

The student-focused funding formula, the new curriculum and the province-wide standards for elementary and secondary education are a few of the ways we are doing that.

Increased accountability, a stronger link between schools and the job market, and better career planning for students will continue to improve our education system.

School board spending is increasing. Through the student-focused approach to funding, boards received \$13.1 billion last fiscal year, and in this fiscal year school boards will receive an estimated \$13.3 billion. That's up \$400 million from 1995.

This year, provincial funding for education will support approximately \$1.9 billion in new school construction and new spaces for 170,000 students. In addition, I am pleased to announce that \$50 million will be invested from the SuperBuild Growth Fund in elementary and secondary school capital to help school boards manage pressing capital needs relating to health and safety matters.

Preparing children for the future starts in their earliest years. Last month, the government received a very important report on children's early years prepared by Dr Fraser Mustard. We are responding to the study's call for a greater focus on the early years by building on recent investments to further strengthen the capacity of families and communities to support children in their early years.

Model community initiatives will be funded to evaluate different approaches to early learning and to raise public awareness. This spring, Ontario will pilot a readiness-to-learn assessment of young children in 48 schools.

An Early Years Challenge Fund will be set up once a framework and demonstration projects have been developed and fully assessed. The government will contribute \$30 million by the second year to match contributions to local early years programs dollar for dollar.

As promised last year, spending on the Ontario child care supplement for working families would increase to over \$200 million to support modest- and middle-income working families with young children. I am today announcing an enrichment of \$80 to the maximum annual benefit, raising it to \$1,100 for each eligible child under the age of seven years.

We are also introducing a number of initiatives to assist children with special needs because we believe this investment will ensure that they too can benefit from the many opportunities that come from economic growth and fulfill their potential, their rightful place as Ontarians.

We are supporting the Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario to evaluate, with research organizations, school boards, and innovators such as the TASK Acad-

emy, different approaches for helping students with learning disabilities.

Dr Bette Stephenson's Learning Opportunities Task Force will be extended to help post-secondary students with learning disabilities.

We will be enhancing children's mental health services by \$10 million this year, growing to \$20 million next year, to enable innovation and better access.

We will be providing \$5 million this year, growing to \$19 million annually, for intensive early intervention for two- to five-year-old children with autism by training front-line workers in therapy, assessment, diagnosis and parent support.

We are enhancing respite care by \$17 million a year for up to 1,700 families caring for medically fragile and technologically dependent children.

Strong and sustainable communities are at the heart of Ontario's strong economy. Investing in those places where the people of Ontario live and work means helping Ontarians to build better lives for themselves and their families.

For the second consecutive year, the government is investing record amounts in Ontario's highway system. The SuperBuild Growth Fund will invest more than \$930 million to improve the condition of our highways, make them safer, and expand strategic highways. At least \$100 million of additional money for transit and other transportation needs are also provided.

In addition to tax cuts for farmers, we are reiterating our commitment to building and sustaining rural communities in Ontario.

The government will provide \$35 million this year for a Healthy Futures for Ontario Agriculture program. The focus will be on "on-farm total quality management" for product quality, food safety and environmental quality. This is crucial to access markets, attract new business and ensure consumer confidence in Ontario's food production system. To recognize the important role that women play in rural economies, we will be providing funding for the employment creation activities of Women and Rural Economic Development.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs' budget is now up \$48 million this year and up \$102 million since we assumed office in 1995.

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Community charities play an essential role in this province. They deserve support for their contribution to building communities.

Speaking of building communities, we are creating a Heritage Challenge Fund of \$10 million to be matched by the private sector to preserve and enhance our heritage in communities throughout Ontario.

Safe, secure communities provide places where families can prosper.

The government continues to focus on ensuring that people feel secure in their communities. This means taking steps to support the personal safety of Ontarians. It involves individuals taking responsibility for their actions

and their impact on others. It also means fostering respect for all members of our communities.

All Ontarians have the right to live without the fear of physical abuse. They must feel safe, and be safe, in their neighbourhoods, on their streets and, above all, in their homes. During the past four years we have delivered a clear message that we are on the side of victims of crime, and abusers must and will pay for their actions.

We have set up the Joint Committee on Domestic Violence to provide advice on the implementation of the jury recommendations from the May-Iles inquest. To date, over 85% of the recommendations have either been implemented or are in the process of being implemented.

We have developed the largest domestic violence court program in the country to prosecute abusers, to support victims and to break the cycle of violence.

Our government is continuing to build on that commitment. We will provide \$10 million annually to support a comprehensive strategy to combat domestic violence, including doubling the number of domestic violence courts in the province of Ontario.

The government will also invest \$6 million this year, annualized to \$8 million next year, so that crown attorneys have dedicated time to ensure that the voices of victims of crime are heard in Ontario's criminal justice system.

The budget commits \$6 million annually to establish and maintain the first registry of sex offenders in Canada under Christopher's Law, which was recently introduced in the Legislature.

The government will provide funding to support the expansion of the youth justice committee pilot to five new sites and will extend the strict discipline pilot program, Project Turnaround.

Funding for the Ontario Police College will be increased by \$3 million, and the government will provide \$5 million to establish special rural agricultural crime prevention units, six such in the province of Ontario, at \$6 million a year.

Ontario's economic and fiscal foundation relies upon a clear and consistent plan to eliminate the deficit and balance the books. Unlike our predecessors, who allowed the deficit to skyrocket to unacceptable levels, we have set out a balanced budget plan with clear annual targets to reduce the deficit and to eliminate it entirely by the year 2000-01.

Again, I am pleased to report that we are on track to meet that goal. In the year 1998-99, Ontario's deficit was \$3.2 billion. This represents a reduction of over \$1.6 billion from the balanced budget plan target of \$4.8 billion.

For the fourth consecutive year, the government has overachieved its deficit target.

The deficit target for 1999-2000 will be \$2.1 billion, a full half billion lower than the deficit target for this year set out in the balanced budget plan.

The deficit will be eliminated in the year 2000-01 as promised.

It is no secret that past governments promised results and failed to deliver. They underachieved and they built up a debt of \$101 billion. That belongs to them on that side of the House.

Interjections.

The Speaker: Order. Members for St Catharines and Ottawa Centre, come to order. Members for Scarborough-Agincourt and Lake Nipigon, come to order, please.

Minister of Finance.

Hon Mr Eves: Only a Liberal could subtract \$101 billion from \$109 billion and get \$22 billion. That's what led us to this problem in the first place. That's why we're in the mess we're in.

In contrast, we have promised to cut the deficit and we have delivered on that promise each and every year. In fact, we have exceeded our deficit reduction target by a total of \$5.5 billion over the last four years.

The government's job is far from finished.

It is hard work reducing the deficit after years of governments allowing it to get completely out of control. In order to protect our fiscal achievements and to spare Ontarians the burden of deficits that threaten all public services, we must avoid returning to the tax-and-spend ways of the past. Balanced budget and taxpayer protection legislation will ensure future fiscal responsibility.

As I told Ontarians four years ago, rebuilding our province would not be an easy task. Today, with many more people working, fewer families relying on welfare and an economy that has grown continually since we formed the government, we are making solid progress.

Under the strong leadership of Premier Mike Harris, and with a clear vision that tax cuts strengthen the economy and create jobs, we have been able to provide the means to invest in the priority programs that Ontarians value most.

It has taken a deliberate plan to realize that vision, the courage to stick with the plan in the face of criticism and the hard work needed to implement it.

We simply cannot return to the tax-and-spend ways of the past. We cannot repeat the mistakes of previous governments. Ontarians deserve better than that.

We must move forward — building on the work that we have done to get Ontario back on track.

We must continue to cut taxes, create jobs and further strengthen our economy.

If we stay the course, we will indeed have a better tomorrow.

A tomorrow where all Ontarians can benefit and families prosper from the foundations that we have created together.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East): I move that we adjourn the debate.

The Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I seek unanimous consent to revert to introduction of bills.

The Speaker: Agreed?

All those in favour, please say "aye."

All those opposed, please say "nay."

Oh right, I need unanimous consent. Maybe I'll do it again.

Do we have unanimous consent to revert to introduction of bills? Agreed?

I heard a no.

Interjections.

The Speaker: You have a right to say no; I understand that.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move adjournment of the House.

The Speaker: The government House leader moves adjournment of the House. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

This House stands adjourned until 6:30 of the clock later today.

The House adjourned at 1651.

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No. 7B

N° 7B

ISSN 1180-2987

Legislative Assembly of Ontario

Third Session, 36th Parliament

Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

Troisième session, 36^e législature

Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

Journal des débats (Hansard)

Tuesday 4 May 1999

Mardi 4 mai 1999

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Clerk
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

Tuesday 4 May 1999

The House met at 1830.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CITY OF OTTAWA ACT, 1999

Mr Guzzo moved second reading of the following bill:
Bill Pr1, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Guzzo moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr1, An Act respecting the City of Ottawa.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

CANADA CHRISTIAN COLLEGE AND SCHOOL OF GRADUATE THEOLOGICAL STUDIES ACT, 1999

Mr Guzzo, on behalf of Mr Klees, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr4, An Act respecting Canada Christian College and School of Graduate Theological Studies.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Guzzo, on behalf of Mr Klees, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr4, An Act respecting Canada Christian College and School of Graduate Theological Studies.

The Acting Speaker: Is the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

CITY OF WINDSOR ACT, 1999

Mr Gerretsen, on behalf of Mrs Papatello, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr7, An Act respecting the City of Windsor.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Gerretsen, on behalf of Mrs Papatello, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr7, An Act respecting the City of Windsor.

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Mardi 4 mai 1999

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

COLUMBUS CLUB OF SAULT STE. MARIE ACT, 1999

Mr Cullen, on behalf of Mr Martin, moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr8, An Act respecting the Columbus Club of Sault Ste. Marie Ltd.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Mr Cullen, on behalf of Mr Martin, moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill Pr8, An Act respecting the Columbus Club of Sault Ste. Marie Ltd.

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

FAIRNESS IS A TWO-WAY STREET ACT (CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY), 1999

LOI DE 1999 PORTANT QUE LA JUSTICE N'EST PAS À SENS UNIQUE (MOBILITÉ DE LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE DANS L'INDUSTRIE DE LA CONSTRUCTION)

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Orders of the day; government House leader.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, the third order. Before Mr Flaherty, the minister, stands to deal with second reading of Bill 17, I seek unanimous consent to move a motion without notice with respect to this bill in order to set out the procedure for this evening.

The Acting Speaker: Is there consent? Yes.

Hon Mr Sterling: I move that:

(1) Notwithstanding any standing order relating to Bill 17, An Act respecting Labour Mobility in the Construction Industry aimed at Restricting Access to Those Taking Advantage of Ontario's Policy of Free Mobility, when Bill 17 is next called, three hours shall be allocated to the second reading stage of the bill;

(2) That the time available for the second reading stage of the bill be divided equally among the three recognized parties in the House;

(3) That at the end of three hours the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and put every question necessary to dispose of the second reading stage of the bill and the bill shall then be referred to committee of the whole House for immediate consideration and that 25 minutes shall be allotted for consideration of the bill at that stage;

(4) That, at the end of that 25-minute period, the Chair of the committee shall, without further debate or amendment, put every question necessary to dispose of all remaining sections of the bill and any amendments thereto and report the bill to the House;

(5) That, upon receiving the report of the committee of the whole House, the Speaker shall put the question for adoption of the report forthwith, which question shall be decided without debate or amendment and at such time, the bill shall be ordered for third reading;

(6) That the order for the third reading of the bill shall then immediately be called and five minutes shall be allocated to the third reading stage of the bill;

(7) That the House be authorized to sit beyond its normal hour of adjournment to complete consideration of Bill 17;

(8) That, in the case of any divisions relating to any proceeding on the bill, the division bell shall be limited to five minutes and that there shall be no deferral of the vote pursuant to standing order 28(h).

The Acting Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry?

Mr John Gerretsen (Kingston and The Islands): Madam Speaker, there is one clarification, just so there's no misunderstanding.

The Acting Speaker: Is it OK with the House that we have a clarification? OK, go ahead.

Mr Gerretsen: The different parties will go in rotation; in other words, the speakers will go in rotation and each party will not take an hour at one time.

Hon Mr Sterling: I think the agreement is that each party shall have an hour and that the first speaker shall lead off for the government. If they take 20 minutes, then there's 40 minutes left for the government party and it shall rotate around the Legislature.

The Acting Speaker: Is that agreed? Agreed.

Mr Flaherty moved second reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act respecting Labour Mobility in the Construction Industry aimed at Restricting Access to Those Taking Advantage of Ontario's Policy of Free Mobility / *Projet de loi 17, Loi sur la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre dans l'industrie de la construction visant à restreindre l'accès de ceux qui profitent de la politique de libre mobilité de l'Ontario.*

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour): I propose to share our one hour with Mr Sterling, the member for Carleton; Mr Villeneuve, the member for Stormont, Dundas, Glengarry & East Grenville; Mr Guzzo, the

member for Ottawa-Rideau; and Mr Baird, the member for Nepean.

I am pleased to begin this debate on second reading of the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act (Construction Labour Mobility), 1999. The sole purpose of this act is to protect good jobs in Ontario and create more good jobs for the men and women of our construction industry.

Since our election in 1995, this government has carried forward a plan aimed at creating a positive environment for economic growth and job creation. As we heard in the throne speech, that plan is working. Since this government was elected, the number of jobs has increased by more than half a million. Unemployment is the lowest it has been in a decade. Predictions for Ontario's economic growth exceed those of all the G7 countries.

1840

But as we also heard in the throne speech, we are by no means assured of maintaining that positive climate without some real growth in productivity. Our economic future is fragile without such growth.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the OECD, profiles Canada's economy every year. In December 1998 it said that our productivity remains a critical issue in Canada, especially as compared to productivity of US workers. The report said that barriers to internal trade were part of the problem. Indeed, the report said we could now make more gains as a country with freer internal trade than through exports.

That is why Ontario has steadfastly worked to bring down barriers to internal trade in Canada. That is why we have struggled for so long to make construction agreements with Quebec work. This issue has been going on for far too long.

Quebec and Ontario are the two largest internal trading partners in Canada. They are the economic leaders of this country. They need to set an example in internal trade, and yet, regrettably, Quebec has failed to seize the golden opportunity to do so when it comes to construction labour mobility.

Ontario does not want to erect barriers, and yet, having tried every reasonable alternative, we have no choice. A situation that began as unfair is now untenable. The people of Ontario prefer to resolve differences with their neighbours in a tolerant and co-operative manner. There is a limit, however, to the patience with which Ontario workers and contractors can be expected to endure unfair treatment. That limit has been reached and passed. If our workers face a brick wall, why should others have a free ride? If our men and women are denied an opportunity at a decent living and access to jobs across the border, why should we continue to roll out the welcome mat?

Our government is the only government to tackle this inequity seriously. We entered into discussions with Quebec early in our mandate in 1995 and signed the bilateral mobility agreement in 1996. As soon as we heard that the agreement was not working on the ground, wasn't working in fact in eastern Ontario we took action. We made a commitment in last year's throne speech and

this past December we began discussions with Quebec. Now we are following through with our promise to working men and women by introducing this bill.

Madam Speaker, may I briefly remind you of a few of the barriers our hard-working men and women face. First of all, Quebec continues to shut out many experienced tradespeople. Also, Ontario truckers are still unable to haul sand and gravel between construction sites in Quebec. Ontario contractors are still required to use Quebec aggregate haulers to carry these loads between sites in Quebec. Also, Ontario contractors still cannot bid on contracts in Quebec until they have obtained a contractor's licence, even though Quebec contractors can bid in Ontario before registering here.

Quebec has repeatedly tried to reduce this problem to a collection of technical issues to be discussed. The problem is more than technical. It is the lack of open and unrestricted access generally and a seeming unwillingness to embrace the terms and spirit of signed agreements on this issue. To be meaningful, discussions must focus on this fundamental and overriding concern.

Add to this the fact that some Quebec firms have enjoyed an additional competitive advantage when bidding on Ontario projects over Ontario firms bidding on the same projects. The Quebec firms, some of them, fail to comply with Ontario's retail sales tax and workplace safety and insurance premium rules. For example, in the first few weeks of April, within the past month, Ministry of Finance staff carried out 156 inspections of Quebec contractors and discovered that 109 of them had not registered as required under the Ontario Retail Sales Tax Act.

After 20 years of barriers, after all the unfair competition, after watching three months of discussions deliver little, Ontario has had enough. Passing the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act will level the playing field. It is not the kind of levelling we wanted, but it is the kind of levelling that is needed to ensure jobs for Ontario workers.

This bill has a broad base of support among the people of Ontario, both along the border with Quebec and far from it. In the last few weeks we have seen mayors from municipalities along the Quebec-Ontario border, in the Ottawa area in particular, tell us that they are prohibiting Quebec access to municipal construction bids. Many of the councils passed resolutions to that effect. The support from these municipal leaders and from the construction associations has been encouraging.

Last week the president of the Ontario Home Builders' Association, Murray Koebel, was here in the members' gallery, along with Mayor Brian Coburn of Cumberland and Dwayne Mosley, the head of the truckers' association in Ottawa-Carleton, who is also here tonight. They were here to show their support.

The mayor of Ottawa, Jim Watson, supports this bill. He recently said: "Successive Quebec governments have been stubborn and pigheaded. It is time to stand up for our workers."

The mayor of Kapuskasing, J.C. Caron, said, "Council has decided it will not hire any Quebec contractors for municipal work."

Rick Evans is the economic development manager for the city of North Bay, and he says: "In our view, the Premier has taken the right approach and put some closure to this issue. Action had to be taken."

While support for the move has been largely unanimous on the Ontario side of the border, voices within Quebec have also supported this action. The Montreal Gazette said: "Ontario is right to gripe about this. The wonder is that more Quebecers aren't complaining too."

What will the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act achieve? As the Premier promised when he first launched the Fairness is a Two-Way Street program, which was back in December 1998, the legislation will "mirror the impact of Quebec's restrictive measures." Specifically, the bill will prevent companies from places that don't treat Ontario workers fairly from bidding on any publicly funded construction projects in Ontario, such as schools and hospitals. Also, the bill will require companies from places that don't treat Ontario workers fairly to register before bidding on private sector construction contracts in Ontario. The bill would also impose registration and other restrictions on construction workers from places that don't treat Ontario workers fairly. The bill would also prohibit truckers from these places from hauling aggregate in Ontario.

1850

The proposed legislation would also establish a Jobs Protection Office to register companies and workers doing construction work, to coordinate information sharing and support enforcement, to maintain the hotline and support enforcement of existing and new requirements, and provide information and assistance to Ontario workers and contractors seeking opportunities in places that don't treat Ontario workers fairly.

Contractors from places that don't treat Ontario workers fairly would not be allowed to work on any construction job in this province unless they register with the Jobs Protection Office, post a \$10,000 security and provide detailed financial statements. Construction workers from places that don't treat Ontario fairly would also have to register with the Jobs Protection Office, and they would have to meet the certification requirements of their home jurisdiction. If they work in a trade that has compulsory certification requirements in Ontario, they would also have to meet those requirements. Our workers face restrictions like these when they try to work in Quebec. It is only fair that Quebec workers and contractors abide by similar rules when working in Ontario.

This has been an interministerial effort to protect Ontario's jobs and Ontario's workers and our suppliers and our truckers. With this bill, we are acting to ensure that the citizens of this province have a fair crack at a good job and a decent living.

In conclusion, the glaring inequity that this bill addresses was driven home when the Premier and I visited Jacques Bedard Excavation in Navan on

March 31, 1999. Three months earlier, in December 1998, the Premier had been at the same place to launch our renewed program to establish a level playing field. Behind the Premier were pegboards with hard hats on them: On one side there were 18 hard hats and on the other there were three hard hats. It was a graphic illustration of how little things had changed despite all our efforts. Quebec construction workers were still enjoying a six-to-one advantage in access to jobs over Ontario workers. Ontario cannot allow another construction season to pass without our construction workers and companies receiving the same access to Quebec that Quebec workers enjoy in Ontario. With this bill then, the balance in the hard hats on those pegboards is restored, the inequity is addressed.

I must thank those members who have assisted during the past more than a year in which we have been consulting with, listening to, meeting with people in the construction sector: workers, contractors, truckers, suppliers, throughout eastern Ontario, from the Ottawa Valley all the way down through Ottawa and Hawkesbury, Cornwall. The consultations have been of immeasurable assistance in making sure that we as a government were informed about what is actually happening now on the ground in that area of the province and indeed what has been happening for 30 years or so in that area of Ontario. Those consultations and the advice that came forward from those consultations have been invaluable with respect to the real world of what actually has been going on and, regrettably, continues to happen in eastern Ontario.

Certainly I thank my colleagues Gary Guzzo, the member for Ottawa-Rideau; John Baird, the member for Nepean; Norm Sterling, the member for Carleton; Leo Jordan, the member for Lanark-Renfrew; Bob Runciman, the member for Leeds-Grenville; the supporters we have had with us, the numerous associations, including the truckers' associations, home builders, contractors from all over Ontario, particularly eastern Ontario, the many individuals who have written, the unions that have supported this concern about fairness and a level playing field in their correspondence to me, and the more than 30 municipalities that have asked that we proceed with this bill, regrettably, because they too would like to see a negotiated solution to this important issue, this barrier to free trade, this barrier to job creation between Ontario and Quebec.

With this bill, fairness is a two-way street.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

M. Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott et Russell) : C'est avec plaisir que je prends la parole sur un projet de loi sur lequel je travaille pour le bien des travailleurs de la construction depuis mon élection en 1995.

Laissez-moi vous dire, madame la Présidente, que j'étais à l'écoute, et puis lorsqu'on est à l'écoute des gens, c'est là qu'on s'aperçoit où il y avait des lacunes qui existaient.

Ce soir pourrait devenir une journée historique pour le secteur de la construction, qui est la pierre angulaire de

l'industrie en Ontario. Ce soir, dans moins de trois heures, nous allons prendre une décision, une décision qui est une des plus importantes pour l'industrie de la construction, une décision sur laquelle beaucoup de travailleurs de la construction de l'Ontario vont crier victoire.

Je suis vraiment désolé de voir que le ministre du Travail n'a pas fait mention que depuis maintenant trois ans et quelques mois je travaille sur le dossier, et puis tout ce qu'il avait à faire dans le moment, c'est de prendre le dossier et de vraiment l'amener ici en Chambre. Ce soir nous allons débattre la deuxième et la troisième lecture sur un projet qui est identique à mon projet de loi 60 que j'ai présenté en Chambre le 4 juin 1996 et qui a été passé en deuxième lecture à l'unanimité dans cette Chambre.

C'est peut-être une victoire pour nous, mais c'est une journée sombre pour tous les travailleurs de la construction du Québec. Je dis bien «journée sombre» parce que, tout d'abord, si je regarde le préambule, les entrepreneurs, les travailleurs de l'industrie de la construction et les transporteurs agricoles de l'Ontario se heurtent à des obstacles lorsqu'il s'agit de travailler et de faire des affaires dans d'autres territoires en raison de pratiques injustes, discriminatoires ou restrictives tandis que ceux de ces autres territoires peuvent travailler en Ontario sans éprouver de telles difficultés.

Lorsqu'on parle d'autres territoires, il faut dire dans ce cas-ci que nous parlons spécialement de ceux du Québec qui viennent travailler en Ontario. Ceux du Québec qui viennent travailler en Ontario, on les comprend. Dernièrement, j'ai vu des programmes à la télévision et puis, avec la ligne ouverte, on s'est aperçu que les Ontariens et Ontariennes n'étaient pas au courant de pourquoi nous devons procéder de cette façon. On doit procéder de cette façon pour la simple raison que nous voulons la mobilité de la main-d'œuvre, la mobilité de nos travailleurs de la construction.

Actuellement, c'est injuste. Nous savons qu'en Ontario, le taux de chômage dans l'industrie de la construction est plus élevé que le taux de chômage global. Je le dis depuis trois ans dans cette Chambre et puis rien, rien n'avait été fait. Statistique Canada nous avait donné l'information. Encore une fois, dû au fait que cela venait de l'opposition, nous avons décidé de fermer l'oreille. Alors que je suis député de l'opposition et qu'il est souvent de mon devoir de m'opposer, je vous assure que le Parti libéral reconnaît l'importance d'adopter ces mesures avant le déclenchement des élections.

1900

Ça fait au-delà de 25 ans que les entrepreneurs et les travailleuses et travailleurs de la construction en Ontario s'attendent à ce que ce gouvernement conservateur s'intéresse à ce dossier — je dis un dossier — que j'ai pris en main. En 1995, encore une fois j'étais à l'écoute de nos travailleurs, et personne du gouvernement conservateur n'a voulu bouger. Je sais que le député de la circonscription de Rideau était au courant. Je lui ai parlé souvent. Je crois qu'il hésitait puisqu'il savait que le projet de loi venait de l'opposition. Mais aujourd'hui, à

la veille d'une élection, nous allons décider de le mettre d'avant. Je ne sais pas si les travailleurs de la construction sont tout au courant de ce que va venir après ce projet de loi. Je peux dire qu'en 1996, même si le ministre nous a dit tout à l'heure qu'il a eu l'appui des municipalités dans la région de l'est de l'Ontario, qui est Ottawa tout d'abord, l'ancien maire en place m'a fait parvenir une lettre en 1996 me disant qu'il fallait aller d'avant. J'ai aussi un document que je vais vous mentionner tout à l'heure disant que le conseil régional d'Ottawa-Carleton donnait des millions et des millions au secteur commercial du Québec, ce qui nous empêchait d'améliorer la situation économique en Ontario.

J'ai toutes les lettres de toutes les municipalités, des chambres de commerce, de Kapuskasing jusqu'à Cornwall, mais nous avons décidé de le laisser mourir. Pourquoi n'avons-nous pas procédé le 20 juin 1996 avec la troisième lecture ? Nous avons fait perdre à l'industrie de la construction de l'Ontario des heures et des heures de travail. Finalement, ce sont des personnes qui ont dû s'en aller vers le chômage. Après que le chômage échouait, n'était plus existant, nous avons dû nous joindre à l'assistance sociale. Est-ce que c'est juste — nous sommes dans l'opposition — pour le gouvernement conservateur de laisser ces personnes souffrir comme elles ont fait ?

J'ai ici une liste de personnes, mais avant de passer à la liste, j'aimerais dire que même si le gouvernement dit qu'il est sérieux dans son affaire, encore jusqu'aujourd'hui je me demandais si le gouvernement était pour procéder avec les deuxième et troisième lectures. Pourquoi n'avons-nous pas décidé de procéder la semaine dernière lorsque M. Moseley de la Greater Ottawa Trucking Association était présent ici toute la semaine ? Nous avons décidé de reporter et reporter le projet de loi.

Lors de la visite de notre premier ministre ainsi que de plusieurs ministres et tous les députés de la région d'Ottawa-Carleton, qui se sont rendus à un local dans ma circonscription à Navan, le premier ministre a dit qu'à compter du 1^{er} avril, aucun autre contrat serait donné à une entreprise du Québec pour la construction soit de routes ou d'édifices gouvernementaux. Mais comment est-ce que ça se fait que huit jours après l'annonce, nous avons décidé de vendre la 407 et d'octroyer à cette firme du Québec la possibilité, ou on a donné notre permission, de prolonger la 407 pour au-delà de 900 \$ millions ?

On dit que nous allons créer au-delà de 6000 emplois. Où vont-ils aller, ces 6000 emplois ? Est-ce que les deux entreprises du Québec vont faire la même chose que lorsque nous avons décidé de construire l'ambassade américaine d'Ottawa, en disant que nous allons faire venir nos travailleurs de la province de Québec et que les travailleurs de la construction de l'Ontario vont demeurer en chômage ? J'ai fait une enquête lorsque le contrat était octroyé pour la construction de l'ambassade américaine à Ottawa. Après notre enquête, nous nous sommes aperçus que l'entreprise du Québec avait omis, peut-être qu'elle l'avait oublié, d'inclure une taxe de 2 718 000 \$. Nos

entreprises de l'Ontario, PCL et Ellis-Don, qui étaient deuxième et troisième, avaient été obligées d'ajouter la taxe. Nous en Ontario avons été obligés, mais le Québec n'était pas obligé.

Aujourd'hui on va nous dire que ce n'est peut-être pas juste, mais j'aimerais vous dire que le 11 décembre dernier j'ai fait le lancement d'un dépliant qui demandait au public d'appeler immédiatement le numéro 1-800. Le ministre a dit le lendemain que le numéro 1-800 existait depuis longtemps. Si le numéro 1-800 existait depuis longtemps, comment se fait-il que M. Bédard du bureau d'Oshawa nous a dit : «Maintenant c'est le numéro, et puis je peux vous dire qu'avec ce numéro, durant les heures d'ouverture de bureau, dans 20 secondes au maximum.» Je dis, «Pas 20 minutes comme le numéro 1-800 qui était donné par le premier ministre et le ministre du Travail du Parti conservateur. Dans 20 secondes vous avez la réponse.» Ce matin j'avais une entreprise du Québec qui avait été octroyée d'un contrat pour fermer une mine dans le nord de l'Ontario. Nous nous sommes aperçus que la firme n'était pas enregistrée en Ontario, qu'elle n'avait pas payé ces taxes en Ontario. Dans 20 secondes, même dans 10 secondes j'ai eu la réponse, immédiatement. Je crois que si le gouvernement est sérieux, nous allons l'avoir jusqu'à la dernière minute ce soir.

J'ai eu ici tout récemment, la semaine dernière, la construction d'une école à Stittsville, Ontario, Vitrierie Gauthier de Hawkesbury, un contrat de plus de 600 \$ mille. La semaine dernière il vient d'être octroyé à une firme du Québec. Est-ce que nous étions sérieux le 31 mars dernier lorsque nous avons dit qu'aucune agence gouvernementale ne pourrait inviter ou donner un contrat à une entreprise du Québec ? Quelques semaines auparavant cette même entreprise, Vitrierie Gauthier de Hawkesbury, avait soumissionné un prix de 334 \$ mille pour une autre école à Kemptville. Encore là, c'est une entreprise du Québec qui l'a eu.

Lorsqu'on dit que c'était injuste, la façon de laquelle le gouvernement a agi à date, est-ce que nous allons être sérieux plus tard, après la troisième lecture sera passée ?

Encore une fois ici, c'est un document que j'ai reçu le 24 avril dernier, une invitation de l'Hydro-Québec aux entreprises de l'Ontario à soumissionner un prix de l'ordre de 400 \$ mille. Remarquez bien, l'article est souligné : «admissibilité : le soumissionnaire doit avoir son principal établissement au Québec.» Voilà, chers collègues, la raison pourquoi on doit procéder le plus tôt possible. Nous voulons de la justice.

La semaine dernière j'attendais une entrevue à la radio. J'ai pris de la peine de rencontrer chacun des entrepreneurs principaux en construction du côté du Québec, et aussi d'assister à l'assemblée annuelle de l'Association des entrepreneurs en construction du Québec. Je leur ai dit, «Nous avons besoin de votre aide. Vous devez cogner à la porte de votre gouvernement et leur dire qu'un jour il serait trop tard.»

J'attendais l'entrevue la semaine dernière avec la firme Ed Brunet et Fils puis on disait, «Nous, on a aussi

de la misère d'aller travailler en Ontario,» ce qui est complètement faux. On nous disait, «Les gens de l'Ontario peuvent venir construire au Québec à n'importe quel temps.» Mais pourquoi avons-nous pris la peine de faire parvenir ces documents-là ? Cela était parvenu à M. Massicotte Bros de Vanier.

J'en ai reçu plusieurs autres, depuis l'annonce du 31 mars dernier, dans la circonscription de mon collègue M. Gilles Morin — j'en ai une ici d'une entreprise, Toiture Raymond de Hull. «Nous avons décidé d'établir un bureau immédiatement en Ontario, mais lors de nos vérifications, l'un des bureaux est une maison en rangée à Kanata, dans la circonscription de notre ministre de l'Environnement. Ensuite, nous avons décidé d'avoir un casier postal. Est-ce que nous avons quelqu'un en place pour vérifier ?»

On nous dit que nous allons ouvrir un bureau dans un avenir rapproché à Ottawa, et puis que déjà nous avons procédé à l'embauche de personnes qui vont faire la vérification. J'en doute beaucoup. Même si j'ai eu une rencontre mercredi dernier avec le bureau du sous-ministre adjoint, on nous a dit que dans deux semaines environ, après qu'on aura passé la troisième lecture, nous allons nous assurer à ce que nous ayons des inspecteurs sur tous les chantiers de construction en Ontario, que toute entreprise du Québec doit venir s'inscrire, qu'une des personnes, un propriétaire de l'entreprise, doit être un résident de l'Ontario. Mais je me demande si nous allons avoir des amis dans cette entreprise.

1910

Nous savons qu'actuellement, lorsque nous allons passer la troisième lecture, nous allons avoir un impact économique épouvantable dans la région d'Ottawa-Carleton. C'est que tous les chantiers de construction vont arrêter, puis qui sera blâmé ? Le gouvernement conservateur, parce qu'ils n'ont pas voulu mettre leurs culottes pendant trois ans. Nous aurions pu procéder étape par étape, et aujourd'hui nous allons mettre une barrière. Quand je dis «un impact économique», les agences d'immeubles, les maisons sont vendues. Nous avons promis qu'ils pourraient rentrer à telle date. Les commerces d'immeubles, dans tous les domaines, tout sera arrêté, et puis que vont devenir les autres personnes qui travaillent sur les chantiers de construction de l'Ontario ? Nous savons dans le moment qu'environ 80 % à 90 % des employés en construction dans le secteur résidentiel d'Ottawa-Carleton proviennent du Québec. On le sait.

Je vais continuer avec d'autres exemples.

En 1996, j'ai fait parvenir une lettre au ministre des Finances dont j'ai la réponse. Il m'a dit, «Nous allons y voir immédiatement.» Je lui ai fait parvenir une lettre que j'avais obtenue de la Commission des accidents du travail qui démontrait que nous avons payé, en prestations à nos accidentés, 50 412 736,44 \$ pour 5703 accidents. C'est ça que nous, les entreprises de l'Ontario, avec la Commission des accidents du travail, avons dû payer. Pourquoi ? Parce que ce gouvernement-là a retiré tous les

inspecteurs de la construction que nous avions sur les chantiers de construction.

J'ai mentionné tout à l'heure que même le conseil régional d'Ottawa-Carleton, à un certain temps, octroyait une quantité de contrats. J'en ai ici pour au-delà, je dirais, de huit millions de dollars dans un an qui étaient octroyés.

Je regarde ici mon collègue M. Grandmaître d'Ottawa-Vanier, qui avait déposé un projet de loi dans le passé, et qui a aussi émis un communiqué de presse le 13 mai 1993 qui avait demandé au gouvernement du temps, au NPD, de procéder le plus tôt possible. Mais nous avons fermé l'oreille.

J'en ai une bonne ici. Je regarde M. Roland Amyot, une personne de Vanier qui travaillait pour un conseil scolaire sur le côté du Québec depuis 14 ans. La personne a eu le malheur de dire, «Je veux rester au Canada, je veux demeurer au Canada, mais au lieu d'être au Québec, je vais m'en aller en Ontario.» Il a déménagé en Ontario, le pauvre gars, le 8 décembre 1995. Comme on dirait en anglais : "You are fired. Tu est congédié parce que tu as quitté la province de Québec." En voilà un bon exemple.

J'ai d'autres cas ici : Elevator Cab Renovations — injustice.

Bertrand Construction l'Original : c'est le meilleur que j'ai vu. Hydro-Québec empêche les compagnies de l'Ontario de soumettre un prix pour construction le long de la rivière Outaouais — le long de la rivière Outaouais, mais en Ontario. Mais si vous êtes une entreprise de l'Ontario, vous ne pouvez pas soumettre une quotation pour un contrat en Ontario. C'est de même, ça existe depuis longtemps.

J'ai Southam Construction, un autre bel exemple. Ce qui importe, c'est une compagnie qui installe des systèmes de sécurité dans les édifices. Il y avait des édifices du côté du Québec et des édifices du côté de l'Ontario. Cela procédait pendant quatre mois, mais le fait qu'elle n'a pas de bureau au Québec bannit leur soumission.

Robert Excavating : nous n'avons que se rappeler les inondations que nous avons eues au Saguenay. Encore une fois, si je vous raconte ces histoires, c'est parce que beaucoup de gens ne savent pas pourquoi on doit procéder de cette façon. Robert Excavating d'Embrun, Ontario : le Québec était pris. Il y avait des inondations. On cherchait de l'équipement. On appelle Robert Excavating : «On a besoin de ton équipement, mais tu ne peux pas emmener tes employés.» Donc, une autre fois, injustice.

Le Groupe Hogan a écrit à la ministre du temps, M^{me} Witmer, qui donnait sa façon de penser sur la façon dont nous avons procédé.

Frank Laverty ; Ron Taillefer d'Orléans ; P & G Roofing and Sheet Metal ; Coudriau et Fils d'Ottawa. La Commission de la construction du Québec, j'en avais une bonne ici. J'avais un collègue, M. Paul Chamberlain de Plantagenet, qui travaillait sur le pont Perley lors de la construction à Hawkesbury. Cette personne-là avait un camion avec ce qu'on appelle en anglais un «boom».

C'était un bras mécanique pour soulever le matériel de construction. Son contremaître lui a demandé d'aller à l'autre côté du pont pour retirer ou enlever sur une flotte de l'équipement. Donc, immédiatement il a dû payer des amendes, et j'ai tous les montants ici.

Mr Bill Murdoch (Grey-Owen Sound): Do you like this bill or not?

M. Lalonde : C'est peut-être parce que je parle français. Si on prenait notre écouteur, on pourrait avoir la traduction.

Mr Murdoch: No, I just asked him if it was a good bill or not.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Grey-Owen Sound, come to order.

M. Lalonde: J'ai avec moi deux autres exemples pourquoi on doit procéder. J'ai un article du Ottawa Citizen : "Why Quebec Jailed a Man for Working."

This is the way it's going in Quebec at the present time. If you have an Ontario man working in Quebec — you just can't go over. If you are caught working in Quebec, either you pay a fine or you go to jail. This guy, because he didn't want to pay a fine, went to jail for 24 days.

There's another one here. This poor fellow's house burned down in a small village. His house burned down and everybody at the hotel — in a small place, everybody meets at the hotel — decided to chip in some money to help him build. So what did they do? On Saturday and Sunday, they got together and built a house. What happened to this poor man whose house burned down? It was \$1,250 and \$250 for every single man who helped him.

Je pourrais continuer avec des items qui pourraient faire jongler les personnes : «Pourquoi doit-on procéder de cette façon ?»

Je veux laisser la chance à un de mes collègues de continuer à parler sur ce projet de loi. Là encore je peux dire que nous, mes collègues et moi du Parti libéral, sommes prêts à supporter ce projet de loi. Les personnes qui voteront contre ce projet de loi vont pouvoir dire que nous avons encore nui à la construction pour une autre année.

The Acting Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): I'm pleased to join in this debate on Bill 17, An Act respecting Labour Mobility in the Construction Industry aimed at Restricting Access to Those Taking Advantage of Ontario's Policy of Free Mobility. The Minister of Labour has introduced this as the Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act, and I want to dwell on this because indeed fairness is a two-way street.

When the government introduced this bill last Wednesday, I stood in the House and I was able to say that I was pleased to support the legislation as an important first step to bring the Quebec government to the bargaining table to improve access for qualified Ontario workers at Quebec construction sites.

As a member coming from the Ottawa Valley, as the member for Ottawa West, someone who has long been

involved in his community at the school board level, city level and regional level, living in my own community, I know too well the frustration of many qualified Ontario workers, particularly along the Ontario-Quebec border and particularly in Ottawa-Carleton, who are being prevented from working across the Ottawa River when no similar restriction exists on our side.

We do need to negotiate a better deal, and this legislation begins that process, but I also said in my response to the minister that it's important to remember that access is the key issue here, not relaxing standards that protect jobs and working men and women, like trade qualifications and occupational health and safety requirements. If we are to accept the slogan that fairness is a two-way street, we have to recognize that protecting workers and employers through better trade qualifications in Ontario will have to be part of the deal.

I have to look at the situation we find ourselves in tonight, where on the eve of an election call we find ourselves debating a bill and in essence rushing through a very important bill.

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I was there back on December 14 when the Minister of Labour came into the shopping centre in Ottawa West where my constituency office is, Lincoln Heights Galleria, and announced his Fairness is a Two-Way Street campaign with lots of media, lots of handouts, lots of posters, a hotline and the whole of it. There was a very well-crafted media campaign with lots of glitz and glitter and people being brought in from all over the province to showcase this wonderful little initiative the province was doing.

As the member who spoke before me said, this is happening almost three years after this government took office, when so many people for so many years were having so much difficulty with this. But it was a good media event. I was there because I did believe that it was necessary to begin a process to start negotiations to level the playing field. We're dealing with access here.

Then we had the announcement that came out at the end of March, whereby the government said it was going to proceed with retaliatory measures to force people in the Quebec government to come to the table, retaliatory measures so that we would indeed have people in Quebec suffering from the same kind of system or some replication thereof similar to what our qualified tradespeople were facing going into Quebec. They made that announcement March 31.

I issued a press release at that time saying that it was important, indeed obligatory, for the government to recall the Legislature so we could bring in a bill and deal with this issue. We don't want to be in the context of creating a trade war. We don't want to be in the context of Quebec bashing in this country of ours. There are implications that go beyond simply trying to make sure that our qualified workers are able to work in Quebec, because there is the issue of other agendas seeking to drag down trade qualifications in the regulated industries, seeking to drag down those protections that are in place,

that have been built to protect working men and women in this particular industry across this country.

I asked for this Legislature to be recalled. In fact, the calendar even said that we would have the Legislature back here on March 25. But we did not meet on March 25, nor did we meet on the 26th or 27th. We did not come back until late April, and then, not the first day this House was in session, not the second day, but the third day — in fact, we only saw the bill here in the New Democratic caucus the day before the Legislation was about to be introduced. In our calls around to the building trades council of Ottawa-Carleton and the building trades council of Ontario, lo and behold, we discovered, talking to those officials, that they had not even been consulted with respect to the wording of the bill.

I don't call this very good government. Here is a genuine issue that the minister is involved in, that members of the government caucus from the Ottawa Valley and from the other parties are involved in, that I'm involved in, yet we find ourselves in a situation where we're presented with a bill and we're being asked to waive printing of the first reading, wave it through second reading, wave it through committee consideration, right into third reading and out.

Why this indecent haste on a piece of legislation that is truly important? To fit another agenda. This government doesn't mind spending \$1 million in advertising its hotline telephone number, billboards across my region — Fairness is a Two-Way Street. You see the whole issue here, but yet this government, when it comes down to bringing forward and putting through this important bill, all of a sudden is calling an election tomorrow. That's far more important.

I had people calling me saying: "Don't delay the bill. The government's going to call the election and all our years of work will go up in smoke." Who controls the business of this House? It's not the New Democratic Party that controls the business of this House. It's the government that comes in and sets the agenda and it's the government that calls the election.

This government has a mandate until June 2000. If this thing is so important, why don't we spend the extra week on it? I'm ready. That's what taxpayers are paying me to do. So don't all of a sudden land on our desks here a bill that's important for all our residents in Ottawa-Carleton, important for a whole host of reasons, and yet all of a sudden, bingo, it has to be done now, now, now. That's an insult to the working men and women of my community, that they only find out about this the day the government announces it. That was Wednesday and here we are, people can't even look at it and talk about the other implications. This issue has been around for a long time.

Mr Murdoch: We're trying to help you. Maybe we should cancel the bill.

The Acting Speaker: Order, order. Member for Grey-Owen Sound, come to order.

Mr Cullen: This issue has been around, as has been said before, for over 20 years. I was a member of Ottawa

regional council when we took the example from New Brunswick. There was no activity happening until, in 1993, the government of New Brunswick, dealing with this very selfsame issue, decided to ban the use of construction workers coming across into New Brunswick, and they were successful in doing that. It was not until then that the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, the city of Ottawa, the city of Nepean and the city of Gloucester said, "If they can do this in New Brunswick, we can do this here." Indeed we began to pass motions, began to take unilateral action.

Our legal staff told us this would be dangerous territory, but we were very concerned. As a result, because of the activity that was happening at the grassroots level in 1993, which I'm pleased to say I was part of, the government of Ontario then came on board and introduced Bill 123. The Honourable Frances Lankin, who was then the Minister of Economic Development and Trade, brought in Bill 123 which gave the government of Ontario the ability to declare jurisdictions as not being able to provide workers into the construction industry.

That was a good bill. That was an excellent bill and had all-party support in this chamber, support from the third party, which was then the Conservative Party, and the support of the opposition, which was then the Liberal Party. That bill gave the government the ability to declare who could participate in the construction industry, that's it, that's all. Because that bill was introduced, that brought the Quebec government to the table. That bill brought the Quebec government to the table, not the motions passed by the regional council, the city of Ottawa or the other neighbouring municipalities, but the fact that that government, an NDP government, brought in a bill that had real teeth.

The government of Quebec came to the table and actually signed an Ontario-Quebec agreement on public procurement and construction labour mobility, setting out the principle of fair, non-discriminatory reciprocal access to employment and business opportunities. Both governments agreed to negotiate a system that would fully recognize and credit the qualifications, skills and experience of construction workers by the other province, and we on our side here agreed to suspend Bill 123 following second reading, and at the end of the day the bill was simply dropped.

There was more work done on this. In 1994, the NDP government was able to sign with the Quebec government a mutual recognition agreement which included qualification, skills and experience of journeypersons and apprentices in 22 trades and access for semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The second part of the agreement opened up the public sector procurement so that suppliers from each province could have access to both markets. We upheld our end of the deal. Unfortunately, in Quebec it fell down, which is a shame and a pity and brings us here today.

No wonder people in my community are frustrated after so many years of effort. My first case as an MPP dealt with a constituent of mine who came into my office,

a pipefitter who found himself not able to get a job in Ontario because all the construction sites had been bid out to companies who brought in cheaper labour from Quebec. He could not employ his trade here in Ontario. He would go from job site to job site and there were no openings for him, there were so many Quebec licence plates there. People who clearly met our qualifications would offer cheaper labour and therefore basically out-compete him for the jobs, yet when he went across the river to try and work in the trade for which he was qualified, he kept on running into bureaucratic hassle after bureaucratic hassle, having to report to the occupational health and safety bureau to update his card, and he simply found he could not find employment. It was too much hassle, too much bother. That's simply not fair.

I understand completely the frustration when he came forward. I looked at this issue and I talked to my colleagues and we tried to bring forward ways and means to find some resolution. In that context, I am very pleased that indeed we have a bill here, but remember, this bill only sets the course towards a bargaining table.

We have to talk about worker standards, because I have here a letter from the building trades and construction department of the AFL-CIO, the national body of which Ontario is a part, Quebec is a part and all the other building and construction trades councils are a part. This is a letter that was written to Mike Harris, Premier of Ontario: "If you're looking for solutions to the inter-provincial construction problem and to curb the underground economy, listen to what the construction industry is proposing."

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This is why I have such a problem with the process, because the trades councils were not consulted. I spoke to the Building and Construction Trades Council of Ottawa-Carleton. I was there at their meeting where this issue came up and I was pleased to be able to tell them that we support creating better access but we also support ensuring that there are standards in place to support working men and women. In fact, if there's anything to learn in Quebec it is that they have better standards protecting their working men and women. There's still the issue of access, and we must resolve that, but no one in this chamber is going to say that we ought to water down our standards, which are there to protect working men and women, in order to make this work. Not at all.

I went there, but they weren't consulted. I spoke to the Ontario Building and Construction Trades Council and they weren't consulted.

Let's remember what the building and construction trades councils want to ensure. They want to ensure "that the provincial...government consider the widening of the certificate of qualifications system. (The implementation of this proposal would facilitate the development of a registry of qualified tradespersons.)"

We want to ensure, everybody wants to ensure, that when you work in a trade, you are qualified to do so. If you're not qualified, the danger of injury, the danger of shoddy workmanship comes about. We all want to make

sure, whether you're a contractor on this side of the river or on that side of the river or a person who is building that school, that hospital, that extension to your home, that you have real qualified people doing the job. That's straightforward. Who can argue with that?

As well, the building and construction trades people say: "That consideration be given to establishing formal recognition systems for eventual linkage with certification programs, among other categories of residential contractors." That's straight up, that makes good sense and that's what we have to be talking about. If fairness is to be a two-way street, then this has to be on the table as well.

"That workers' compensation acts be amended where necessary to provide that businesses or owner-builders engaging individuals or firms with fewer than three employees not already registered with the board...be required to pay workers' compensation assessments on their behalf." This is a fundamental issue.

As a matter of fact, the government recognized this in its earlier commentary about what happens when people come over from Quebec and work here. If you're not covered by workers' compensation, if you're not paying into worker's compensation, you have an unfair competitive advantage. Not only do you put your employees at risk — because if there's an injury on the job site, how can they claim compensation? — but they come in and compete for bids not having to pay for what we believe should be paid for.

Here in Ontario, if you're on a construction site, we require contributions to workers' compensation because we've learned from sad experience that there are accidents and that these people must be compensated. This is how the system works. So we have to make sure this is a mutually recognized system among the provinces. That creates a more level playing field.

"That governments pursue...the feasibility of exchanging compatible data that can assist in the identification of unreported construction employment."

We know that the underground economy exists, but we do not wish to promote it or tolerate it because in that underground economy, non-regulation means that people aren't covered when it comes time for injury and that shoddy workmanship can come about because there is not the insurance that people who engage in that trade have the qualifications that give them the licence to engage in construction, whether it's carpentry, pipe-fitting, electrical or what have you.

These are very, very important things. Again, we're talking about protecting not only the worker but the builder, the construction contractor and that body, whether it's a public body, a school board, a municipality, the provincial government or a private person, whether it be a shopping centre developer or the individual private homebuilder or what have you and that indeed there is good quality workmanship, because you're hiring people who have gone through the trade certification program and know what they're doing. This is important.

These are important issues and ought not to be thrown out with all of this.

I spoke about my own history, my own background, and the frustration in my community. We are going to hear this from others, I'm sure, from other sides of the House, that this has been a long-standing problem. But let us remember — even though the government's running around like crazy because it wants to get everything done in time for an election call — this bill only puts forward some bureaucratic hassles. That's all it does. It tells people that if you're going to come over and work in the construction industry, you must register at a registry office and that if you're working for a construction contractor, they too must register at the office. And yes, there are going to be inspections to make sure that you pay your workers' compensation, workers' safety board assessment, and that you pay your retail sales tax.

But will that actually level the playing field? Will that actually bring the Quebec government to the table? I don't think so. I'm willing to give it a shot, but I don't think so. If this problem sits out there, then what? There are other players involved here. The truckers are involved hauling aggregate, and we're going to learn very quickly that there's also the problem of truckers hauling timber. But what is going to bring the Quebec government to the table if all that's going to happen is that people have to go register?

So they register, so they pay their workers' safety assessment and they pay their retail tax requirements. What then? Is that going to make it easier for our qualified men and women to get access to those jobs on the other side? I don't think so.

I think there needs to be more teeth to this legislation and that is why our party is prepared to introduce by amendment a trigger, a deadline. If indeed we do not have a negotiated settlement by April 1, 2000, then we ought to have the provisions that our government brought in back in 1993, which is stronger legislation which gives government the power to declare, "If you are in this jurisdiction and you haven't met our requirements, you don't work in Ontario," none of this business about just simply registering at an office.

Face it. What's going to happen? The construction companies in Quebec are going to register in Ontario and they're going to pay their retail sales tax and they'll pay their workers' compensation, and their bids will have to go up a little bit to reflect the cost of doing business. But is that going to make it any better for our men and women to get across there? No.

If the object of this bill is to bring Quebec to the table — we know what brought Quebec to the table, because we did it in 1993 — I don't think this is going to bring Quebec to the table. Quebec has seen this bill. They saw the government on the other side rattling its sabres back in December when the Minister of Labour came to Lincoln Fields Shopping Centre and did his little show and tell — all the cameras were there and he basically outlined the program — and then in March when again they rattled the swords and said: "Look, this is what we're

going to do. We're going to make you register." Oh my. "We're going to make you come out and pay retail sales tax." Oh my. I know the minister in Quebec is shivering in her boots. "We're going to make you pay workers' assessment." Oh my.

Well, I'm sorry. If that's not going to cut it, we need something more. We're prepared — and I hope the government side will support this, because it's towards a mutually desirable goal, which is to create fairness between the two jurisdictions for people who are qualified to work in their area so they can go across. If we have a qualified tradesman or tradeswoman going across to do electrical wiring or putting in the plumbing or putting up the drywall or the sheet metal, they should be able to work there. Similarly, if their people are qualified, they should be able to work here, because we have to remember that we still are one nation and there ought to be an ability for people to move in this country of ours to where the jobs are. What, we are going to turn back people from the Maritimes who come to Toronto looking for work? Of course not. But we are talking about fairness and it is unfair what's happening in Quebec today to our qualified working tradesmen and tradeswomen.

We are going to offer, in the spirit — if you'll pardon the pun — of constructive contribution towards this debate an amendment that will give the government the ability to pull the trigger if it believes it's necessary to then move to the next step. If there's not an agreement at the table that they believe is going to work, then they are going to be able to declare a jurisdiction and say, "You, living in that jurisdiction, will not be able to work in the construction industry, no ifs, ands or buts."

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I would say to the government on the other side, it worked in 1993 and it would be a good thing to have in your back pocket here in 1999, going into the year 2000. It's a back-pocket provision that had all-party support. Your party supported it, the Liberal Party supported it back then and I believe it deserves support today.

But we need to negotiate. Let's make this very clear: This is not a race to the bottom. People are talking about reducing costs, yet what does the government say when it looks at the kinds of issues it has to deal with for folks coming across here? They say that folks coming across here are not paying the retail sales tax requirements. Of course they should pay the retail sales tax requirements. They say the requirement to notify the Ministry of Labour on a project start is not being met; it should be. That occupational health and safety laws aren't being met; they should be. That workplace safety and insurance premium rules aren't being followed; they should be. We're not talking about undoing these things; we're making sure that these things are being met.

Similarly, the whole issue of trades regulation: Why do we regulate trades? Let's just think this one over. There was a time when trades were not regulated. So why in Ontario do we regulate trades? For two reasons: One is to protect the worker and the other is to protect the consumer, the person buying the service being provided by

the tradespeople. We regulate trades to make sure you know how to operate equipment. With advances in technology we have more and more mechanization and with it the increased danger of risk of injury. So you need to know how to operate the equipment and you have to take that course, you have to do your hours, you have to pass that test to get that certificate. It's good for the consumer to know that he or she has a qualified tradesperson there and it's good for the worker because we know that person at least is familiar with the tools required to do the job. That's a protection for all of us.

Quite frankly, I think there is something to be learned from Quebec in this regard because there is more regulation with respect to trades qualifications. We're not talking about watering that down; all we're talking about is creating a level playing field, creating better access for our qualified workers. We do not wish to water down those things that protect workers, those things that protect consumers. I cannot believe this government would sign a deal that would water that down.

But I will tell you, in the context of all of this, as we go into an election, for those people who are concerned that the government may trade away those protections that we have built over the years in terms of protecting workers in the workplace, whether it is occupational health and safety, trades regulations or workplace safety, your best guarantee of working out a deal with Quebec that won't erode any of these things is to elect a New Democratic government. I have to tell you that it's to elect a New Democratic government.

What is the record of this government when it comes to workplace safety? We just have to go through the sorry list, the very sad list of everything they've put into place in terms of labour protection. This government has taken so much away in terms of labour protection, yet they're going to stand up and say, "We're going to protect workers." I'm sorry, this is the big, bad wolf coming to look after your children there if you're Ms Pig in this environment. Not at all.

We support this bill as the means to work out and negotiate at the table fair access to construction and trades workplaces in Quebec — absolutely — but let us remember the fundamental principle here: that we're not willing to support trading off those protections that people in Ontario have worked long and hard for, that people in Quebec have worked long and hard for. We cannot expect them to give up those things that protect them from injury in the workplace and those things that protect consumers and contractors from bad workmanship. These are the important things.

These things have not come about because of some benign government, whether it's this government or any other government. They came about because workers got together and said, "We must protect ourselves." This is how they did it and this is how trade unions came about: to protect themselves in the workplace through the use of regulation, co-operatively, hand-in-hand; as matter of fact, when you look at the past decades, working together to protect the workplace. Face it. If we have a worker

who is injured on the job, there is a public liability as well as the private liability. There is a taxpayer liability on the health care system and on the support that's required to maintain this worker's family.

We are very concerned on our side that we do not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Yes, we have to have fair access. I've been part of that since 1993 and my record is clear. I'm pleased to say we will support it today, but I'm also pleased to say that this bill, if we are going to ensure that there's going to be an agreement at the table, requires more teeth. When we get to committee of the whole, I will be pleased to bring forward that amendment. I expect to have all-party support with respect to that amendment because it's a trigger designed, in April 2000, to grant the government the ability to declare a jurisdiction and it's a provision that had all-party support back in 1993 in this House.

So with this, we are prepared to facilitate the passage of this bill. We expect that this bill will carry second reading tonight. We'll go into committee of the whole. Unfortunately, we won't have hearings to hear from the very people who have vital interests in this, who only have heard about this bill, seen the wording of this bill for less than a week, due to the government's own timing. As well, we will facilitate this so it will receive royal assent before this government pulls the plug on its own destruction. I look forward to the election and I look forward to a better result, because I think Ontarians are sick and tired of seeing an income tax cut that has cost them in terms of services in their communities.

Mr Gerretsen: A Liberal government, right, Alex?

Mr Cullen: I have to say to my colleague from Kingston and The Islands that unfortunately his party does not have the wherewithal to correct the damage Mike Harris has done to our health care, our education and our community services. Only the NDP has, because only the NDP has the courage to deal with the engine that's driving all of this, the income tax cut which has benefited only the top 6% of the population yet has cost us \$10 billion in additional debt here in Ontario. With that, I will now concede my seat to the next speaker.

Mr Garry J. Guzzo (Ottawa-Rideau): May I first of all just say that I express my appreciation to the minister, Mr Flaherty, for bringing this bill forward. This is something very dear to my heart that I've worked on over a period of almost 25 years. The matter first was discussed at the regional council table in the mid-1970s, at a time when the late Dennis Coolican was regional chairman, Andy Haydon was the mayor of the city of Nepean, Bob MacQuarrie, a former member of this House, was the reeve of the township of Gloucester and the member for Ottawa-Vanier was then the mayor of Eastview.

It's hard to believe that it takes a quarter of a century to get anything done in this province. It was 24 years ago that I sat at that council table and we discussed Highway 416, a four-lane highway from 401 into the city of Ottawa. It'll be finished next year, after 25 years.

Mr Gerretsen: Who started the job?

Mr Guzzo: I know who started it and I remember that the Rae government put two overpasses going the wrong way too. If Mr Pouliot was here I'd have more to say about that.

It was 23 years ago that I sat as a member of the bench and bar.

Mr Gerretsen: You guys had been in power for 22 of those years.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Kingston and The Islands, come to order.

Mr Guzzo: Let this man from Kingston and The Islands — do you want the floor? I never came to your council chamber when you were mayor and interrupted very often.

I think of the Unified Family Court that we introduced a few months ago; 22 years ago I sat in my first judicial bar meeting to deal with it. Today we have, what, still 40% or 45% of the province under the old system.

But nevertheless it is very gratifying to see this bill coming forward and to hear the comments of the parties that it will pass tonight, because 25 years ago we came up here. Mr Grandmaître, the mayor of Eastview at the time, was a member of the committee. We met with the Premier of the province, Bill Davis; the member for Gloucester, Bert Lawrence; and the member for Ottawa South, the Honourable Claude Bennett. We were assured in 1974 or early 1975 that this would be rectified.

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Mr Gerretsen: What happened?

Mr Guzzo: I'll tell you what happened. It's a very interesting comment on history, what happened. He said, "I won't do it right now; I'm going to wait until after the Quebec election, which is only a few months away." A strange thing happened on the way to the polls in Quebec that year: René Lévesque came to power, and nothing happened. Nothing has really happened in 25 years in relationships between the federal government and the province of Quebec, and between our province and the province of Quebec, on this issue and many other issues. It's a sad commentary on —

Interjections.

The Acting Speaker: Member for Ottawa West, come to order.

Mr Guzzo: Yes, get control of him.

Here we sit today dealing with an issue. I don't want to be partisan about this. As a person who was relieved of my judicial duties and was back on the business side, the private sector, I watched with interest what the Rae government attempted to do. I commend the minister, Ms Lankin. I agree she moved the envelope forward in a very fine effort. Unfortunately, the Quebec government did not live up to its word. It's exactly the same thing that happened to Mrs Witmer two years ago when she took the thing: taking them at face value, believing what was said and then being sabotaged. I think it's a sad commentary on the intergovernmental relations we have had.

Mr Lalonde's private member's bill — I recognized the sincerity of his effort — mirrored the 1993 bill of Mr Sterling, the member for Carleton. Broken promises did

not result in any benefit for the people of Ontario who were struggling to work on that side and in fact work in their own trades on the Ontario side.

The complaints I have heard, as a municipal councillor and as a lawyer representing contractors and workers, have been numerous, but probably the most serious one I remember was an Ontario electrical contractor on Merivale Road in the west end of Ottawa. He had been in business for 26 years and had an enviable record of running a very fine operation. He built himself a cottage on Blue-Sea-Lake, not 20 minutes from the Parliament Buildings, just into the province of Quebec. He did his own wiring, as one might expect he would do. He has no occupancy permit, six years later, for that cottage. He can't get one. There's nothing wrong with the wiring, but they will not inspect it. They won't inspect it because he's not licensed over there, working on his own cottage.

You might say, "That's fine," until you go to finance it or until you go to sell the building. It's impossible to do. On a matter of principle, he will not spend the \$5,000 or \$7,000, whatever, on the contractor with the qualifications — no better than his own, I assure you; a master electrician in Ontario. That master electrician or journeyman over there will charge him to come in and inspect his work on his own building, which was done six years ago.

I look back at Ontario contractors bidding on the Quebec side and being successful, the low bidder on federal government or private sector contracts. They wait, and they're told it's going to take somewhere between four and seven weeks before they can be certified in order to bid on the contract they've already won. What's the difference? Why should it take four, five, six weeks? How long it will take depends how long before the bid is closed and the contract is awarded. If it takes five weeks to close and award the bid, it takes six weeks to certify them, and if they're not certified at the time of the awarding of the contract, they can't assume their responsibilities and perform the contract. If it takes seven weeks until the contract can be awarded, it takes eight weeks for them to be certified. It's a continual process.

In the union halls of Quebec, every resident of Quebec is called before an Ontario tradesman registered over there is called. In Ontario, it's a far more democratic process, but sometimes it's not a 50-50 situation. When Quebec contractors bidding on Ontario contracts order materials, they have them billed to the province of Quebec. The materials are shipped to the site in Ontario, but because the bill of lading is sent to Quebec, they don't pay the sales tax. They are not obliged to pay our sales tax and they forget to pay their own sales tax. On schools — some of which have been built in our time, in the riding of John Baird — we've seen contracts where the cost of the goods, the materials alone, has been \$4 million or \$5 million. A 7.5% or 8% saving gives them a \$400,000 or \$500,000 jump on the Ontario contractor.

The member for Ottawa West makes a good point about bringing the Quebec government to the table. It's not going to be an easy situation. No one knows this

situation better than a labour lawyer who practised labour law in Lac Saint-Jean. I've had occasion, when the present Premier of Quebec was the Minister of Justice, to discuss this matter with him ad nauseam. He understands it better than anyone in this House. He understands it better than any lawyer practising law in the city of Ottawa. He admitted at that time — certainly not thinking ahead to the time when he would be in the Premier's chair — how difficult it would be, because since the days of the Duplessis government, the labour unions have run the government in Quebec.

Mr Cullen: He wasn't a separatist, either. He was an NDP back then.

Mr Guzzo: You people will grab at any straw, won't you? You can have him.

Let me just suggest to you, after talking in the last six to 10 weeks with Quebec MLAs, with Quebec federal members, that there's a solution to this problem: It's a zone along that border of 30 miles or 30 kilometres that would be outside the limit. We don't have to change the labour laws of Quebec; we don't have to revert back to what it was earlier, but we have to have a competitive zone along there. That's a position that many of the MLAs and particularly many of the federal members would welcome and be prepared to support.

I, like my friend from Ottawa West, have some difficulty in believing that the Bouchard government is not going to come to the table, but it is a possibility; I'm prepared to admit that. I never thought we would have to go this far. It is not a pleasant situation. When this was discussed in our caucus, let me just assure you, two and three years ago, it looked like an extreme position. Today there are people who appreciate that it is not extreme. It is frustrating, and we may have to go further. The issue is one that has been kicking around. As I say, in my lifetime I have been dealing with it for 25 years, and it wasn't a new issue at that time. I simply say that I respect the position, and I was appreciative of the support I received from the member for Vanier, the former mayor of Eastview, Mr Grandmaître. I regret that when he was in a position to do something in the Peterson government, he did not have time to take it under his wing, but I understand the constraints that were placed on him.

This situation cannot continue. We have people, tax-paying individuals in Ontario, who are being treated as second-class citizens. They and their families are suffering. These are individual workers and contractors and employees of those contracting firms. It has to stop, and it has to stop now. I look forward to the passing of this bill, and I particularly commend the minister for having the foresight to bring it to the position it's at today.

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Mr Dalton McGuinty (Leader of the Opposition): I know there are a number of members of my caucus who want to speak to this very important issue, so I will not speak at great length.

I want to say from the outset that we are very pleased to rise in support of this bill and to ensure its passage this evening before the election tomorrow. I want also to

express my disappointment with the fact that this government has dragged its feet on this bill. Viewers should understand that Bill 17 is essentially the Jean-Marc Lalonde bill, which was introduced in this Legislature over three years ago and which received the unanimous support of all of the members present at the time.

It's insightful to understand that now, at the 11th hour, with this government staring into the face of an election, it decided first it was going to go through some kind of a billboard campaign, putting up billboards certainly in Ottawa-Carleton. Then they were going to have a 1-800 number. They were going to make very much of the fact that this was suddenly a most pressing issue for them to address.

A member of my caucus, Jean-Marc Lalonde, introduced a bill which would effectively have addressed this problem three years ago, a bill which was supported by all members present in the Legislature on the day it was debated. This government chose to deep-six the Lalonde bill. It chose not to bring it forward to committee and not to allow it to see the light of day. We find ourselves on the eve of a provincial election with a government anxious to ingratiate itself with those communities, particularly those along the Quebec border that have had to contend with this unfairness for the last several years. This government has now decided it's going to just get its act together.

You've got to wonder about its commitment to this legislation and to those workers who have been adversely affected for the past four years because of the unfairness that prevails. You've got to wonder about this government's commitment, when it chooses to pass this bill, likely the last piece of legislation passed by this government, at the 11th hour, relying entirely on the goodwill of the opposition parties to make this happen.

You'd think the government might want to ensure it allowed enough time for this to go out to committee, to provide for improvements along the way by those people who are affected directly by this legislation, people who work on the front lines. You'd think the government would have taken the time to ensure there was sufficient time to gain that kind of input. But again, the government chose to launch an expensive billboard campaign and to make it clear to the world at large that they were very concerned about this issue. Now we find ourselves, as I say, on the eve of an election.

It's important to understand too that for quite some time the Premier said that come April 1 there would be no more Mr Nice Guy when it came to dealing with this issue and that Quebec contractors ought to understand that come April 1 there would be no second chances, granted that this government meant business.

Then we find out, I think it was April 14, that this government entered into a contract for the sale of Highway 407 just north of Toronto. Part of that contract provides for construction of an extension on that highway, to the tune of \$900 million. It's been a long time since we've had a \$900-million construction contract signed like that in Ontario. Now we discover that this contract

was entered into with a Quebec company. So it's quite obvious that Mr Harris has some very deeply held convictions when it comes to making sure the Quebec government understands fully the depth of his commitment to workers in Ontario; but on April 14 he enters into a contract, which, by the way, nets this government \$1.6 billion in profit at the last hour. Either we're sending a signal to the province of Quebec and to the government of Quebec that we mean business when it comes to this issue, or we're not. If we are, then why is it that Mike Harris entered into a contract which is going to pay \$900 million for a construction job to a Quebec construction company?

I would ask Ontario voters, particularly people who live in those communities that have been plagued by this problem for such an extended period of time now, to fully consider the fact that Mike Harris decided at the 11th hour to enter into a political propaganda campaign, to put up the billboards and the 1-800 number and now, relying entirely on the goodwill of the opposition parties, he chooses to make this law and then to run on this as part of his election platform, if he was truly committed to bringing about fairness.

The members opposite have made reference to the fact that we've been talking about this for a long time in this Legislature. If he was truly committed to resolving this problem, would he not have introduced legislation a long time ago? Would he not have adopted Jean-Marc Lalonde's legislation? Would he not have shied away from assuming all of the risks that he is this evening by relying entirely on the goodwill of the opposition parties? If he really meant business, would he not have taken all those things into consideration? Finally, would he not have said to the Quebec construction company to which he gave \$900 million, "Sorry, I can't do business with you, because I'm trying to send a clear, unequivocal message to Quebec, making it clear that we mean business when it comes to this issue?"

Will this legislation come at some cost to Ontarians? Absolutely it will. The greatest heat, I predict, will come from within and not from without once the rubber hits the road when it comes to Bill 17. Again, I think the Premier's bona fides, the Premier's real commitment when it comes to addressing this issue, is certainly very suspect. The real tragedy here is that we weren't debating this legislation three years ago, at the time Jean-Marc Lalonde first introduced it.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I want to take some time to comment on this bill, but if you'll give me a little bit of latitude, I'd like to first of all wish well my colleague Bud Wildman, the member for Algoma, who everybody knows is going to be retiring. This is the opportunity I have to say just a few things, Mr Speaker, if you will allow.

I was first elected in 1990 and Bud, quite frankly, was one of the members of our caucus, along with Shelley and a few others, who took a number of northern members under his wing — people like Tony Martin, myself and Len Wood — and really gave us a good grounding in

what our job was to be as politicians in northern Ontario. Bud, I think, instilled in most of us in northern Ontario, the new members of the class of 1990, a work ethic that is pretty hard to follow, considering the hours Bud keeps. He told us always to remember who we are, where we're from and who we work for, and basically work as a group in northern Ontario because it's so important that we stay together as northern politicians to lobby effectively for what is good for our part of the province.

I have all kinds of things I can say about Bud. Some of them were said today, but I just want to mention a couple of things very quickly. It can't go without being said that Bud played a very instrumental role in our government in being able to move certain pieces of legislation and concepts that eventually became legislation in our government. I can take great pride that Mr Wildman, the member for Algoma, was the minister responsible for starting up the first forest audit, which looked at the condition of our forests in northern Ontario and how much timber was available. Resulting from that, we have seen the expansion or creation of nine new mills in northern Ontario, which created thousands of jobs for northerners. I'm the benefactor in my communities of that particular work Bud started. It shows the work Bud has done over the years. When he became minister, he understood what the job was and set out to do that job.

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The last point would be that you cannot talk about Bud Wildman and not recognize the contribution he has given to Ontario when it comes to First Nations people. My new riding of Timmins-James Bay encompasses all of James Bay, and there's hardly a person within the aboriginal community or leadership who doesn't know Bud Wildman and the work he has done for the First Nations people of this province. So on behalf of the First Nations people of my communities and across Ontario, Bud, we want to wish you well and we want to thank you for the contribution you've given to the people of Ontario and the First Nations people.

We are here tonight to debate Bill 17, which deals with the construction trades as they apply to workers coming from Quebec into Ontario.

I want to start off my comments by saying a couple of things. We understand what the issue is. The issue is that there are construction workers and contractors from Quebec who have an unfair advantage when they come into Ontario to do business in this province.

I don't think Ontario or the Conservative government of Ontario is saying, "We are anti-Quebec," or "We don't want Quebecers to feel welcome in Ontario." Rather, I think a lot of us are feeling frustrated that there's an uneven advantage given to Quebec contractors and workers when they come to Ontario, because we tend to have no barriers in this province and we operate on the principle that if you come from anywhere across Canada or the United States and do business in Ontario, we'll treat you all the same and you will comply with the rules of Ontario.

Unfortunately, the rules in Quebec favour Quebec workers and Quebec contractors more so than any other province. In other words, Quebec tends to take care of their own, they tend to be fairly protective of their own industries and workers and they don't tolerate competition from outside quite as easily as we do here in Ontario.

In the Ottawa region, as we know, it has been a long-standing problem. The construction industry has had to compete against contractors from Quebec who are given this unfair advantage, and then those same contractors and workers don't have the same ability to compete back on the Quebec side of the border.

I want to remind this House, because it was mentioned a little bit earlier, but I think for the record we have to say that in 1992-93, the then Minister of Economic Development and Trade, which was Frances Lankin, introduced a bill that dealt with this particular issue at the time and negotiated a settlement with Quebec. Unfortunately, the government of the day eventually did not live up to that agreement, and we find ourselves back here again having to introduce legislation.

Before I get to what this means for northeastern Ontario, I want to say another couple of things very quickly.

There are three approaches you can take, either in government or in opposition, to this bill: You can do the politics of this bill, which is Quebec-bashing; you can deal with the issue, which is, how do we make sure that Ontario workers are treated the same as Quebec workers so that we compete on an equal footing; and the last thing is that we can do nothing. So there are basically three approaches we can take.

I just want to say I'm a little bit disturbed by the comments of the leader of the Liberal Party, Mr McGuinty, a little bit earlier when he decided to play with the politics of this bill. I think for nation-building, that is very, very dangerous. In his comments, he was alluding that somehow or other the Conservative government should not have allowed a Quebec company or conglomerate to bid and be successful in the purchase of an Ontario asset, in this particular case, Highway 407. Now, I'm against the privatization of 407. I think it should not have been sold to anybody. But all of a sudden for the Liberal leader of Ontario to say, "It should not have been sold to that company because they came from Quebec," I think stinks highly of politics.

We are not to discriminate, in my view, about investment in this province, no matter where it comes from. If somebody from the United States, British Columbia, Quebec, New England, England, France or Japan wants to invest, we should be trying to do all we can to get those dollars invested in Ontario, because in the end they will assist our ability to create the kind of employment we need in this province to sustain the programs and lifestyles we're used to in Ontario.

I distinctly heard the leader of the Liberal Party go on a tangent about how the Harris government had done a wrong thing to sell this thing to a Quebec organization. I think that's just politics. You stay away from that. I don't

think the Ontario government should have sold 407, but if they're going to sell it, the highest bidder is who we should be selling it to. In this particular case, as I understand it from the facts, it was that particular company. I think that's playing politics.

Through the discussion you heard the Liberal Party going on a little bit about, "This bill didn't go fast enough and you didn't do this and you didn't do that." A little bit too warm, a little bit too cold, just right. It sounded almost like Goldilocks. The Liberal Party took a position that was a little bit on both sides of the fence and tried to say: "You didn't do this and you didn't do that. If we had been there we would have done it differently, but in the end we support it."

It's real simple. You either support what the government does, you oppose what the government does or you play the politics of the bill. Those are your three options. I don't think we should be playing the politics of this bill. I think we should be choosing either to support it or to oppose it. Personally, along with my party, I support what the government is trying to do. But I want to put on the record that I am not in it for Quebec-bashing and I have to believe, and I know, that the members of the government aren't in it for that reason either, because in this assembly we all understand that this is a nation made up of different provinces, of people from different cultural backgrounds and languages, and we live within this great nation as brothers and sisters across this great land.

As in every family, at times we have some disagreements, and in this particular case we have a disagreement when it comes to how our contractors and the construction trades and our workers within the construction trades are treated compared to Quebec workers and contractors. We're trying to address that.

The easiest way to deal with this thing, in my view, would be for the Quebec government to say, "Let's try to find a way so that Ontario contractors and workers are treated on a par with Quebec contractors and workers when they go to Quebec, and then there would be no need for this legislation." But if the Quebec government doesn't want to deal with it, I think it's incumbent upon this Legislature and members of all parties to try to find solutions for their communities.

This will bring me to the last 20 minutes of what I have to say here, and I want the government members to listen to this because I want to make an appeal to you.

We have the same problem, as you are well aware, in northeastern Ontario. In ridings like my new riding of Timmins-James Bay or Len Wood's new riding of Cochrane-Timiskaming, there is along the border not only the issue of Quebec contractors and the construction trades, but there's what's happening in the forest industry and in the exploration industry when it comes to mining. In our part of the world construction is a big business, but most of the people who are employed in the construction industry where I come from by and large are Ontarians. There are some Quebec contractors, there are some Quebec workers who work for those contractors, but by and large it's mainly people from Ontario.

This bill, yes, will address some of the inequities that we have in northeastern Ontario when it comes to the contractors' business in construction in northeastern Ontario, but most of the people where I come from and where Len Wood comes from and whom he's going to represent in Cochrane-Timiskaming, if the good voters in those ridings re-elect us, are people employed in forestry and mining.

I want to give you a couple of examples of why we need to have amendments in this legislation that deal with that, and I'll be proposing these amendments when we go to committee of the whole. The first one I'll deal with is mining.

Over the last six months to eight months, roughly, I have been, I would almost say deluged by people who are in the mining exploration business who have come to my office, given me a call, sent me e-mails, or sent me letters or faxes. There's a recurring theme in what they're telling me. They're saying two things: "The industry of exploration is going down the tubes in Ontario. We're not getting the kind of investment we need to sustain the kind of exploration activity we need to put the mining business on a secure footing."

The reasons for that are many, but partly it's because the government does not support the mining industry in the way it used to in Ontario, and certainly does not support it in the way the Quebec government supports it. Let me give you an example.

I'm a drilling contractor. Let's say my name is Barbara Courte and I'm from Courte Drilling and I'm doing work for an exploration outfit of some type, let's say Falconbridge. If I am operating my drill in Quebec, if I drill below 400 metres underground the Quebec government will pay 50% of my drilling cost. That's a huge incentive to attract investment to do drilling on Quebec properties.

When we do drilling in Ontario, there is no assistance by the province whatsoever. If I'm an investor and I have \$500,000 to invest in a property to do exploration, my \$500,000 in Ontario means a straight \$500,000 investment in drilling below 400 metres. If I take my \$500,000 and I put it in Quebec, my \$500,000 will lever an additional \$500,000 from the government, for a total drilling program of \$1 million.

What that means is there are more drilling activities going on in exploration in Quebec and, because that's happening, they have a much better chance of finding a mine, because in mining it's not putting one hole in the ground that's going to find you a mine; it's by doing systematic work both at the geologist's level and at the exploration level when it comes to diamond drilling.

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What we see in Ontario, a big part of it, is the Ontario government has to become much more proactive, in my mind, and support policies and enact policies that are going to give the Ontario drilling community a bit of an advantage. I wanted to put that on the record because a number of people from the mining community have come to me and have said that and I thought it was important to

put it on the record. But I want to give you what's happening.

I was approached by a number of drilling contractors last year, people we call diamond drillers. They're people who have rigs that are worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. They go out and buy the rigs, they contract for a mining outfit and they go out and do drilling on properties in Ontario. What's been happening as of late, because there's not a lot of work out there, is some Quebec contractors have been coming into Ontario and have been undercutting the contractors from Ontario. As a result, Ontario drills are sitting idle while Quebec drills are drilling on Ontario properties.

The reason they're able to do that, as my friend Mr Cullen from Ottawa West has said, is that they come over into Ontario. In some cases they don't pay workers' compensation, depending on the size of the outfit, so that's a competitive advantage. They're not harassed as we are, as we go into Quebec, by the QPP. The OPP on this side doesn't harass them in any kind of way. The Ministry of Labour doesn't go in and harass them, as happens in Quebec. They're given a huge advantage when they come into Ontario.

As a result, we have Ontario firms and Ontario individuals who have their life savings in these drilling outfits who are basically sitting there not doing anything. I'll give you one example: Barb Courte of Courte Diamond Drilling. They were busy like gangbusters for a number of years based on some exploration work that had been going on since about 1993, 1994. As of late, we see people like Barbara Courte and Garry Courte who have seen their business dwindle to a shadow of what it was because what we're seeing are Quebec contractors coming across and bidding for whatever work is left in our area.

What will happen, quite frankly, if we're not able to try to resolve this issue is that people like Barbara and Garry will basically be forced to go out of business. I for one am not going to stand by — I would hope the Conservative government is not going to stand by — and watch Ontario contractors such as Barbara and Garry go out of business on the basis of unfair competitive advantages that people from the Quebec side of the border get when they come into Ontario.

We have an amendment we're going to be putting forward in my name a little bit later that basically is going to expand the scope of the bill to say that we're not only going to deal with this bill when it comes to contractors in the construction industry, but we need to deal with those contractors that are involved in the mining exploration industry.

I want to be clear. We're not talking about a fellow or woman who goes to work for a mining operator — Kidd Creek, Falconbridge, whoever it is. Those are mobility rights issues and we're not going to get into that tonight. What we're dealing with is the contractors. We're saying that if you're a Quebec contractor in the mining exploration business and you have a diamond drill or other type of equipment and come into Ontario to do business, you

will be subject to the same parts of the bill that the construction workers have when it comes to coming into Ontario under this bill. I have that amendment that I want to put forward later.

The other issue we have to deal with is what's happening with the forest industry. I can tell you that in the last two weeks I've been approached by at least three, if not four, contractors who have come to my office. In one case a fellow stopped me on the street. He was driving his truck. I was at an official opening somewhere. A guy stops me at the official opening in the middle of the ceremony to come and tell me he had just lost his contract cutting for a firm — I won't say the area because he doesn't want his name public, but let's say in northeastern Ontario — because a Quebec contractor had come in and basically pushed him out of the job.

We're seeing a lot of guys and women who own equipment, \$800,000 or \$1 million worth of equipment, who are being pushed out of the forest in favour of Quebec contractors who own equipment and come into Ontario. The reason they're coming in in the forest industry is because they've not done the job we have when it comes to managing our forests more sustainably. They don't have the amount of timber on the Quebec side of the border to keep their industry going, so the contractors who have harvesters, trucks, whatever, are moving over to the Ontario side on contract and are taking whatever they can get as far as work in Ontario is concerned in order to keep the payments on their equipment so they don't lose it. For the big lumber company I guess it's a good deal, because you end up getting contractors for a bit less than you would pay normally. But it's unfair labour practices, in my view, because again, when they come over into Ontario they are competing with Ontario contractors on an uneven footing, and that's not right.

So the other amendment that we want to bring forward would say we want to be able to make sure that people who are employed or people who are engaged in the harvesting or the transportation of timber are recognized under this bill. I think it's important that we do that, because we can't look at what's happening when it comes to the trade issue just from the construction industry's point of view. We need to take a look at what's happening in northeastern Ontario, and I'd probably argue eastern Ontario as well. We know there are a lot of forest activities in the southeastern part of the province, where you have people who are coming over from Quebec and are competing on an uneven playing field.

Again, my preference would be that we do something to try to get Quebec to the table to negotiate a settlement. I'm used to bargaining; I've bargained on both sides of the table, both union and management. Sometimes you have to push in order to get them to the table to negotiate. Hopefully that's what this bill will do, that once we get this bill passed, the Quebec government will be forced to come to the table to try to come to some resolution on this issue so that we open up trade to Ontario contractors into the province of Quebec. I think that has to be the point.

Je pense que c'est très important qu'on reconnaisse un couple de points dans ce débat.

Premièrement, laissez-moi dire aux Québécois qui regardent peut-être cette émission ce soir à la télévision : je ne veux pas que vous poigniez l'idée que les législateurs de l'Ontario passent cette loi afin de punir les Québécois, parce que ce n'est pas du tout le point.

Le point qu'on fait comme législateurs ontariens, c'est le même point que vos membres de l'Assemblée nationale font pour vous au Québec. C'est que vous, vous prenez une position de protéger vos travailleurs et vos industries pour la province de Québec, pour que l'économie de la province de Québec et votre économie puissent bénéficier de votre industrie.

Nous, en Ontario, on a toujours une attitude un peu plus libre quand ça vient à l'échange de travailleurs et à l'échange de contracteurs d'un bord ou l'autre de la frontière entre le Québec et l'Ontario, ou n'importe quelle autre juridiction. Ce qui arrive en Ontario, c'est qu'on a beaucoup de contracteurs et de travailleurs qui sont déplacés à l'ouvrage, parce que vos contracteurs, quand ils viennent chez nous, sont traités de la même manière que les Ontariens, et nous, on n'a pas la même chance, quand on retourne au Québec, d'être traités pareil aux travailleurs et aux contracteurs de la province de Québec.

Tous les législateurs de cette Assemblée aimeraient mieux avoir une résolution qui a été négociée avec votre gouvernement. Justement, en 1992-93, le premier ministre du jour, M. Bob Rae, et sa ministre M^{me} Lankin, avaient essayé de négocier, avec votre premier ministre du jour, une entente qui aurait dit que, quoi qu'il arrive quand ça vient au Québec et à l'Ontario, les mêmes règles s'appliqueraient sur les deux bords de la frontière. Ça, c'est juste.

On dit : «On est un pays grand, un pays immense, et on a besoin de trouver des manières de travailler ensemble. Pour être capable de promouvoir le déblocage et l'échange est-ouest, on a besoin de règlements qui sont un peu pareils d'un bord ou l'autre, soit le Québec ou l'Ontario.»

M. Rae avait négocié ses ententes avec votre premier ministre, et il n'a pas été nécessaire dans le jour de mettre en place une législation telle qu'on voit aujourd'hui. Mais les temps ont changé, le gouvernement a changé, et le gouvernement du Québec a décidé de mieux protéger les Québécois, aux dépens des travailleurs de l'Ontario. Et nous, comme législateurs, on doit protéger les nôtres.

Ce qu'on dit aux travailleurs du Québec et ce qu'on dit à votre gouvernement est très simple : venez à table. Négociez avec les Ontariens. On est du monde chaleureux. On est préparé à négocier une entente qui fait du bon sens pour les Québécois comme les Ontariens. Mais nous, on ne peut pas s'asseoir à l'arrière regarder les travailleurs et les contracteurs de la province et les traiter d'une manière différente de celle pour les Québécois.

C'est pour cette raison qu'on amène aujourd'hui à cette Assemblée cette législation.

I want to say one other point that I think needs to be made in this particular debate. You couldn't get into this debate without raising some of the issues that some of the people within the construction trades have raised with me. I've talked with people like James Moffat and others who have raised this. I certainly want to be able to hear what they have to say, but I guess at some point you have to try to figure out what's best at the time that you find yourself at. That's the issue of how we deal with the construction trades.

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Some people are of the view that what this does is basically force the Quebec government to weaken their labour laws. As I read through the legislation as it's written, I don't particularly see that. I want to say that if, reading this legislation, I would get the sense that this government is pressuring the Quebec government into — Mr Speaker, I wonder if there's a quorum in the House. Can you check?

The Acting Speaker (Mr Gilles E. Morin): Would you please check if there is a quorum.

Clerk at the Table (Ms Lisa Freedman): A quorum is present, Speaker.

The Acting Speaker: The member for Cochrane South.

Mr Bisson: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I just want to say that, as James Moffat in the construction trades had commented before, he was worried that this particular bill dealt with giving the province of Quebec added pressures by Mike Harris in order to weaken Quebec's labour legislation that they enjoy in that particular province. One of the things that I did when the bill was given to me today, I went through it and read it in great detail, conferenced it with a few other people in order to make sure that it does what I think it does, and from what I can see of the bill, it doesn't deal with trying to pressure the Quebec government into weakening labour standards. So from that particular perspective I'm comfortable that the bill is going to do what we ask it to do, and that is to make sure that we treat Quebec workers and Ontario workers the same. In Ontario and in Quebec, I think that's good for all.

I just say in closing, I am going to support this legislation. At committee of the whole I'll be bringing forward some amendments that deal with protecting and making sure that those people in the mining industry, precisely within the exploration industry, and those people engaged in forest activities are protected under this bill. With that, I'll leave the time on the clock for another of our caucus members to have a few words on this particular bill.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Further debate?

Hon Noble Villeneuve (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs): It's a privilege and an honour for me to rise tonight on this very special bill. It's a bill that we've been looking at for quite some period of time.

I recall well having a discussion with my colleague from Prescott and Russell. I recall it very well because it was a very stormy day in the middle of winter and I was stuck on the 401, not able to go anywhere, and I was on my cell phone with my colleague discussing it with Radio-Canada. My colleague from Prescott and Russell kept telling me that Bill 17 was unconstitutional. He told me, and the public at that point, a number of reasons why it was unconstitutional, and his bill was going to form a kind of a soft doughnut in the area surrounding the city of Ottawa, a kind of no man's land, if you will, between the province of Quebec and the province of Ontario. I stood fast and supported — I had not seen Bill 17 at that point, however, I had discussed with my colleague the Minister of Labour what was coming, and I had no problem at all.

I appreciate that my colleague from Prescott and Russell has changed his mind and is now fully supportive of Bill 17. However, when I discussed it with him on Radio-Canada that particular afternoon, he was very adamant that Bill 17 was unconstitutional, it was attacking the construction people from the province of Quebec. Certainly I had a great deal of difficulty trying to convince him at that time that the bill was not only constitutional but indeed was what we needed.

What we need is exactly what's going to be enacted here tonight. It's a matter of bringing forth exactly the same rules that apply to our Ontario workers that now apply to Quebec workers. Certainly I feel it's important that the province of Ontario finally — and I say "finally" because it has taken a long time and I have heard this from many of my constituents on numerous occasions. Mr Speaker, I know you realize that I represent a border riding and we've had a number of discussions.

We have here tonight Dwayne Mosley, who represents the negotiator for the Greater Ottawa Truckers Association. I have met with a number of the people Dwayne represents. Certainly, he has done an excellent job over many years representing the Greater Ottawa Truckers Association. They have not only brought concerns they had regarding regulations within Ontario, but they've also brought major problems they had with the way Quebec truckers were treated in relation to the way Ontario truckers were treated by officials of Ontario.

That concerned me because we have quite a number of truckers in the Ottawa area who are making a living at moving materials, snow, whatever. They were being maligned to some degree. Somehow or other, the truckers from Quebec seemed to have almost a free ticket going and were not even being challenged as to whether their trucks were in acceptable, roadworthy condition, and a number of other areas. We've had a number of discussions regarding those particular areas, and I am very pleased to see that Dwayne is here with us this evening, finally seeing part of what he has lobbied for very strongly over a long period of time coming to fruition.

I had the opportunity of living close to the border of Ontario and Quebec. Jocelyn Dumais has been attempting to get the attention of his government for some period

of time. Jocelyn Dumais is the president of LADAT, l'Association pour le droit au travail, in other words, a gentleman who wants the right to work. He has been attempting to get the attention of not only M^{me} Diane Lemieux, who is the minister responsible for labour in Quebec, but also of the Premier of Quebec, the Honourable Lucien Bouchard, and it has somehow or other been very elusive. For some reason the Honourable Diane Lemieux, the Minister of Labour, has been telling the people who will listen that she does not know what Ontario needs, what Ontario is asking for.

It's fairly simple, M^{me} Lemieux: Nous vous demandons tout simplement — nous allons appliquer les mêmes règlements, les mêmes exigences à vos Québécois qui veulent travailler en Ontario, que vous appliquez à nos Ontariens qui veulent aller travailler au Québec. C'est tout simplement la justice pur et simple. Si M^{me} Lemieux ne comprend pas exactement ce que le Québec exige des Ontariens, peut-être que nous pourrions lui envoyer les papiers qui lui expliqueraient exactement ce à quoi nos Ontariens doivent faire face quand ils visitent ou quand ils veulent aller travailler dans les chantiers du Québec.

The other area that is of considerable concern to me is the fact that Quebec contractors actually had an advantage by being out of province. They could come into Ontario and submit a bid on a contract, and if indeed they got the contract, because they were non-Ontarians, any supplies they bought in Ontario were subject to a rebate under Ontario retail sales tax. That was a distinct disadvantage to our Ontario contractors, and we discussed this on a number of occasions. If you lived in and operated out of the province of Quebec and you bought supplies in Ontario, the 8% sales tax, you obtained a rebate from Ontario. This Bill 17 will correct that very unjust situation that has existed for as long as we've had a sales tax in Ontario.

2040

I simply wanted to get on the record the fact that I have been supportive of this type of legislation for as long as I've been around this particular Legislature, and that's over 15 years. I simply want to say that I am fully supportive of Bill 17 — the sooner the better. I gather it will come forth tonight, and if I as a member of this Assembly can assist M^{me} Lemieux or whomever in the province of Quebec to understand that we simply want reciprocity, we simply want exactly the same thing they're applying to us, then I'm quite prepared to make a trip to wherever in Quebec to explain to my colleagues exactly what we need.

Mr John C. Cleary (Cornwall): I want to speak in support of the bill also. After years of tireless work I just want to congratulate the member for Prescott and Russell on behalf of the Ontario construction workers for finally seeing it being acted upon by the government of the day.

Restrictions on Quebec construction companies and workers of Ontario have been needed for some time. I guess it takes an election to get the government working for the residents of Ontario.

For some time now, Ontario construction workers have faced barriers in working in Quebec, and while it is unfortunate that barriers are required, it is clear that restrictions must be established in order to ensure a level playing field for the construction workers.

The former bill has been supported by a resolution from the municipal councils in the Cornwall area. I really want to read one of the resolutions.

"And whereas the city of Cornwall, as recently as September 9, 1996, supported Bill 60 introduced by MPP Jean-Marc Lalonde to eliminate unfair practices in the construction industry;

"Therefore be it resolved that Cornwall city council prohibit Quebec companies from bidding on city of Cornwall capital projects until such time as the government of Quebec removes its barriers to out-of-province construction workers...."

I just want to thank my colleague again for his persistence in getting this legislation to where it is now and restricting the contractors, workers and haulers.

With the legislation, among others, it is clear that the government is very capable of pushing through legislation at the 11th hour. On behalf of the Cornwall riding area residents, I urge the government to act on cleaning up some other messes too in the name of health care and health care restructuring. Patients' lives are on the line and the government must be responsible.

I also want to mention the waste of over \$100 million in government advertising paid for by taxpayers.

Again I extend my congratulations to the member for Prescott and Russell. He has worked long and hard to ensure that Ontario construction workers are treated fairly.

Mr Gilles E. Morin (Carleton East): I hope it's not presumptuous on my part to say that perhaps tomorrow an election will be announced. I want to take advantage of that, after 14 years of service in this House, to wish the best of luck to all of you for the upcoming election.

Ça a été un plaisir fantastique que de servir dans l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. Ça m'a donné une expérience unique, une expérience que j'ai acquise avec vous tous.

Will I miss politics? Yes, I will. Do I feel sad about leaving politics? Yes, I do. It's the best example of democracy. But democracy cannot exist without freedom of expression, and this is what we have here. What disturbs me the most is when I see bickering, when I see fighting among Canadians. I accept the debates in the House. That is healthy, that's what I enjoy, because we all have a different opinion but at the end we're all here to serve Ontarians. That is our function, that is our role.

From 1985, when I was elected, only 20 are left here, so it shows that many come in and many go. There's an old saying in French, "Plusieurs sont appelés mais peu sont élus" — "Many are called but very few are elected."

But we have this opportunity to fight for a cause we believe in, and this is why I support Bill 17, because it may help achieve some fairness for construction workers in Ontario. We can understand that Quebec would try to

protect the interests of its own workers, but Ontario is suffering because of the disparity in the regulations between Ontario and Quebec in this area.

Prescott and Russell MPP Jean-Marc Lalonde addressed the problem when he introduced Bill 60. It had the support of members of all parties but not that of the governing Tories. Finally, three years later, the coming election has spurred the government to seriously address the issue, which seems suspiciously more about politics than about the welfare of our construction workers. Mr Lalonde deserves our thanks for keeping the issue on the table. What bothers me is that the Premier made his long-overdue announcement in Prescott and Russell to overshadow the extraordinary ongoing efforts of its Liberal MPP.

Although I support this bill, my personal concern is that these measures not be taken or perceived as a stance against Quebec workers, businesses or indeed the province of Quebec. I have had the impression that some people see this act as a retaliation against Quebec itself, and this pains me greatly. The time for such division is over.

As a francophone and a Canadian, I have always felt passionately that our brightest future lies in our openness and goodwill towards one another. At the same time, I resist the idea of communities that work only to protect their narrow interests. In pursuing this measure we should understand that our common aspirations ultimately unite us, and as such, we should do everything we can to return the parties to the table and negotiate towards that goal.

All Canadians should feel free to move across this country and to pursue opportunities wherever they find them. That is the ideal. We must therefore resist the impulse towards the balkanization of Canada in the form of trade barriers. It is ironic that we should expand those barriers in our own country as we progressively drop them between ourselves and the United States, Mexico and the world. This bill should only be used as a wakeup call until a reasonable compromise serves to level the playing field.

2050

Quebec is our biggest trading partner and in many respects our greatest ally. That's why it's a shame we have let this disagreement fester for so long. We can't let these measures raise the temperature of debate to the point where the situation escalates further. It is not unreasonable to predict further retaliation from Quebec in the form of even higher barriers between us. What about possible restrictions to our wine and beer, for example?

Our goal must be a true reconciliation of interests. While I regret the need for this measure, I take hope from the belief that it will help, as we invoke each day in this chair, Speaker, to establish and maintain a land of prosperity and righteousness where freedom prevails and where justice rules.

That is the end of my speech. Best of health to all of you. Best of luck. May you continue to serve this province and this country the best you can.

Mr John R. Baird (Nepean): At the outset, I'd congratulate my colleague the member for Carleton East for all his years of service to this place. I recall there was once a column written that said he had the most class of any member in the Legislature. That's certainly been my experience with him. He's served his constituents very ably and very well, and I congratulate him for all of his years of service.

I want to also thank all members of the House for agreeing to speedy debate of this important piece of legislation. I thank Liberal members and I thank New Democratic members for their important speed to get this bill through, because it's tremendously important to my colleagues. It's tremendously important to constituents in my riding of Nepean. It's important to people in our entire region, whether they be in Metcalfe or Stittsville or in Barrhaven or Bells Corners, and they feel very strongly about it.

I also want to thank on the record the Minister of Labour for his tireless efforts on this issue. He has worked exceptionally hard. He has been down to eastern Ontario on four or five occasions over the last number of months and has made extraordinary efforts to try and negotiate an agreement with our friends in the province of the Quebec, regrettably to no avail, and we were forced to proceed with this next step of legislation. But I do want to thank him for all his hard work, and his staff at the Ministry of Labour. I also want to thank Craig Rix for all his efforts working on this important piece of legislation.

This bill is important to a good number of constituents of mine. I'm joined in the House, in the gallery, by Dwayne Mosley from the Ottawa-Carleton truckers' association, who's worked exceptionally hard on this issue on behalf of his members, as have a good number of other tradespeople, as have a good number of contractors, working hard to try to achieve fairness, nothing more, nothing less.

But in all honesty, the people who have spoken up about this issue probably most passionately aren't those affected; it's the friends and neighbours of contractors, of tradespeople, of truckers who may haul aggregates, the friends and family of electricians, the neighbour of a carpenter who have so passionately spoken up in their defence. I can tell you, whether it's been at community events, whether it's been in constituency appointments in my office or phone calls or e-mails or out at the doors, I have heard a good number of people talk about this issue for some time.

All parties coming together to help pass this legislation speaks volumes about the unity within this House that can go forward, and hope that Quebec will come forward, with some reasonable accommodation to see this issue resolved.

What we want is free trade within Canada. The member for Carleton East spoke about Quebec being our largest trading partner, and indeed he is very correct. We do want to see fair trade between the provinces because that will lead to more jobs for our people and more jobs

for people in the province of Quebec. That is incredibly important.

I was concerned with one proposal, one element of it, with respect to forced unionization. This bill doesn't go that far. I want to thank the Minister of Labour for making that one change. He said we will mirror but not replicate the Quebec legislation, which I thought was very aptly put.

Also, earlier in the debate there was some discussion about the whole issue of Highway 407 going to a company with indeed some Quebec businesses being involved with it. But it's a very different situation. I want to put my thoughts on that issue into the record. It's not Ontario tax dollars being given to a contractor from Quebec, rather it's investment from Quebec coming to Ontario. But I would be remiss if I didn't note that on the Highway 407 privatization and expansion the deal is 61% represented by Spanish interests and brings more investment into Ontario, which is something I know there's a substantial amount of support for.

This piece of legislation is really important because it deals with the most basic aspect of our economy, jobs and people's right to be able to earn a living, the ability of small businessmen and entrepreneurs, someone in free enterprise, to earn their keep for their families. Too often we've seen examples when this has not been the case.

When I look in my own constituency, we're building — the government is funding and the school boards locally are building — two high schools in Barrhaven. Both contracts went to firms from Quebec. That was very disconcerting for taxpayers, to say that our workers, who do an able job, can't have that same access across the other side of the river in Gatineau. That was a real concern, both with the construction of John McCrae school and Mother Teresa school.

I had the pleasure yesterday of attending, along with the member for Carleton, Mr Sterling, a groundbreaking of a new high school in Stittsville. I know that's an issue he has worked very hard on. We checked the licence plates on the construction site. This contract was awarded before the legislation went through, but already 90% of the plates were from Ontario. I know in Barrhaven just a year ago it was about 90% Quebec plates. That's something important.

This piece of legislation is important because there are a number of new schools. There are three new schools, in fact, in addition to that high school being built in the member for Carleton's riding and my constituency. We feel very strongly that there has got to be equity between the two provinces, that if their contractors can build schools in Nepean, Kanata or Stittsville, our contractors have got to have the same opportunity in Gatineau, Aylmer or Hull. It's a tremendously important issue.

It's also important with the expansion of the Queen-sway-Carleton Hospital. Again, an Ontario firm won that contract, but it could just as easily have gone to a Quebec firm. We certainly want to see a level playing field. We want to ensure that, whether it's meeting payroll taxes or respecting the obligations imposed by our health and

safety laws. We want to ensure particularly that the Workers' Compensation Board remittances are made. That is something that's very important, because if a worker from Quebec is injured on the job and they haven't been paying the Workers' Compensation Board, all those honest, law-abiding firms have to pick up the slack. That's simply unacceptable, to ask any honest, law-abiding taxpayer to pick up the slack for someone who is less so. That's something I believe is incredibly important.

As a final thank you, I thank all members for agreeing to debate this issue expeditiously. I think it will be a win-win situation for all of us to ensure that there is equity and fairness between workers in Ontario and Quebec. It will be an important priority as we continue to try to work with our friends in Quebec to ensure that there is a level playing field and that indeed fairness is a two-way street.

If I could also at this time thank the constituents in Nepean for all their time, effort and support.

Mr Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre): Before I address the bill before us, let me also give my very best wishes to those members who are voluntarily retiring at this time: the member for Carleton East, who has served with great distinction; also the member for Algoma, who has also served this Legislature for many years. I want to wish him and my friend from Ottawa East, who isn't here at the moment, all the very best. If I've missed anyone else, I pass on my very best.

I want to say at the outset that this bill is fairly close to one this House had an opportunity to debate a few years ago under the name of Jean-Marc Lalonde. I bring up his name because often his work and efforts are left out when we discuss the nature of this issue. I cannot find anyone — and I will include staff — who has worked harder on this single issue than the member for Prescott and Russell. He has spent weekends; he has spent nights. As you know, he had hearings to which both provincial governments sent staff, and they were set up in a non-partisan, non-biased manner to try to gather the information that was required to look at the fairness of the mobility of workers and on what basis we truly have a free trade arrangement in terms of construction.

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I just want to underline a number of things the member for Prescott and Russell has said. He's very passionate about this. He has always brought this issue up in our caucus, many times, and I think in many ways this bill is a tribute to him.

Having said that, let's say we're all in agreement, by and large, on 95% of this, which does not happen very often, even though it is fairly late in the game and some people may accuse others of using this for electioneering purposes. But let's begin with the assumption that the need is there; it's quite obvious. In my particular riding, the northern boundary, which runs a couple of miles, is the Ottawa River. I have received numerous representations — Dwayne Mosley, who is with us this evening, being one of them — sharing the nature of the issue and

what it means for Ontario workers and truckers to have a fair arrangement in working with the Quebec situation from an Ontario point of view. I want to say that this has been an ongoing irritant.

At the end of the day, the spirit of what the member for Carleton East said is: We truly want to bring out the very best, we want to look at fairness, we want to acknowledge that between Ontario and Quebec we do have probably the largest volume of trade in North America, probably in the world, and we want to make sure that is encouraged. But sometimes you need to send a shot over the bow, as it were, in order to have someone say, "Just a minute, this truly is not a fair arrangement."

While there are lots of sensitivities around this, we have to begin to work towards some fairness. That has to be taken by the provincial government and that has to be taken by the construction industry and other industries in Quebec if they're looking at the mutual opportunities of making a living in two jurisdictions where barriers in fact do not exist, there are no boundaries and we can freely give of our services and trade skills to help both jurisdictions, and ultimately Canada, grow and develop.

I don't wish to dwell too much further except to say that, like three years ago, this letter could have been written, say, five months ago. It's a letter addressed to my colleague Mr Lalonde. It says:

"Further to your request, the Ottawa-Carleton Home Builders' Association is pleased to have the opportunity to write to express our concerns with barriers that continue to keep Ontario construction workers out of Quebec. Despite the interprovincial agreement from May 1994, only about 90 people travel from Ottawa to the Outaouais each day to work in the Quebec construction industry. Meanwhile, thousands of Quebec construction workers continue to work in the Ottawa-Carleton region daily. Barriers and disincentives to working in Quebec do remain."

The date of this was July 1995. It could have been written two or three months ago. It was written by Richard Lee, the executive director of this particular association. He supported the direction in which Mr Lalonde's bill was moving. I know he would support this bill today.

There are some requests for modifications to it. I don't have too many. I had one that had to do with "ordinarily resident" in one jurisdiction or the other, but frankly I would leave that to the lawyers to fight over. It seems to me that the bill, as it stands, is supportable.

Mr Derwyn Shea (High Park-Swansea): I would like to rise just for a moment to put two points on the record. The first point is to indicate that in terms of the bill that is before us tonight, I obviously hope there will be unanimous support from the House, or as much as we can possibly get. The bill represents equity, fairness and reciprocity. In fact, in a historic sense, it really is a true test of the Canadian federation, founded on the principle that all provinces, all territories are equal and should share equally in the benefits and the tribulations of this country. I hope that would be the gentle and appropriate message sent to our sister province.

In that regard, I'm sad we have not referred to the new territory of Nunavut. I wish well to all the people of that territory. It obviously is part of this equal federation that we call Canada.

I hope we will in fact support this bill and give it speedy passage tonight.

Final comments: I understand there is some rumour floating around the House tonight that there could well be a general provincial election sometime within the next 13 or 14 months. I understand that some members have started to place their signs up. I hope they are weather-proofed; I hope they do have significant amounts of wax on them to go through snow and a winter season yet before the election is called. I understand the NDP has its bus waiting at the front door, and I've seen that bus. I only hope it can last for another year. Nevertheless, we will wish all members of this House very good fortune.

I stand as one who is not returning; I am one of those who is voluntarily stepping down. I want to express my admiration for each and every person who serves in this House. For me, this has been like going back to graduate school. I say that as I look to the member for Renfrew North, whom I have watched with great interest over the period that I've been here, because I find he has an interesting style. He now becomes the dean, as we see the member for Algoma retire. I've watched that member read his books at night, so he's encouraged me to bring my books in, and we continue to read and exchange notes. To have served with him and many others on committees has, for me, been a great honour.

We've had moments of partisan bantering back and forth. There have been times when we have found ourselves sitting in this House day after day, literally, night after night, 24 hours a day, ad nauseam; we have found ourselves going on forever, yet that has been part of the democratic process. There has been very little rancour in that regard.

I share, and would enjoin myself to, some of the comments made by Mr Morin. I think he's right in terms of the bickering, that we'd like to see less of that. That is sometimes, sadly, the nature of the political process. But I have learned to have consummate respect and regard not only for this institution, but for the men and women who serve here. It has been a great honour for me to be here. I have learned to appreciate my province even more than I understood before I came in here — and I have more than just a passing interest in Ontario history — and in that regard have learned to understand the Canadian federation a great deal more as well.

I'd like to thank, as I conclude my comments, the people of High Park-Swansea for having posited their trust in me. I have been in one capacity or another holding office in this municipality for about 26 years, and it has been an exciting period for me to share. I'm looking forward to my return to parish life in a full-time capacity. Perhaps some of the experiences I've gained here I'll be able to take with me there.

I would like to say thank you and, as I conclude my comments, also wish my mother well, who is in serious

difficulties at St Joseph's hospital. I wish her well and Godspeed on her journey.

To all of my colleagues in this House, I wish each and every one of you well. Let's support this bill.

The Speaker: Further debate.

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): Before I begin my comments on Bill 17, I'd like to thank my friend, that noted Anglican divine from the west end, for his too kind comments. To him, to my cottage mentor, the colonel from Papineau Lake, the member for Carleton East, to the Attorney General and to all those who will leave voluntarily, I wish you all the very best; and to some of us who, unbeknownst now, may be destined for an involuntary separation some days hence, let the fates act as they will.

I rise to support Bill 17. I want to say that I've enjoyed the debate tonight. I want to join my colleagues in paying tribute to Jean-Marc Lalonde, the member for Prescott and Russell, who, as I think all fair-minded members would know, has been aggressive and vigilant and very active on this account since his election to the assembly some four years ago this spring.

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I want to also, in a fair-minded way, say that I appreciated the remarks of the Minister of Labour, which remarks I listened to with some care. He laid out in a very clear fashion the case for the bill that is now before the assembly. I want to say very clearly that I strongly support this bill, and I will perhaps add an emphasis that is a bit beyond that of some of my own colleagues. I have had some of these discussions before in an opposition caucus and in a government of which I was part, and we did not act in the period 1985 to 1990. In some ways I regret that, because I can tell you that the men and women who work in the economy of the Upper Ottawa Valley have laboured under this unfair situation for too long.

In our area, things like trucking have been particularly egregious and vexatious for as long as I have been the member of the Legislature for north Renfrew, and that is now almost 24 years. Trucking, interprovincial labour mobility, in the Pembroke and Rolphton areas — we have three interprovincial connections in Renfrew county with Quebec: one in the Cobden area at Chénault, Portage-du-Fort, Quebec; another major interprovincial connection across the bridge just east of Pembroke; and another connection in the Rolphton and Rapides-des-Joachims area about 60 kilometres northeast of Pembroke. Those bridges have been the flashpoint for a long time.

I want to say that my constituents — truckers, electricians, labourers, small business people — would want me to stand here tonight and do as I am doing, supporting this legislation. The unfair practice and the irritating and frustrating attitude of the Quebec government, Quebec revenue officials, Quebec transport officials, Quebec trucking officials and others has been provocative, to say the least, for a long time — too long a time. They have

sorely tested the patience of fair-minded Canadians living in counties like Renfrew and cities like Pembroke.

In the 1980s, when I was in government, my colleagues chose not to act for a couple of reasons. One was of course a very expanding economy, and we quite frankly needed as much labour as we could get for the time in which we found ourselves responsible for the government of Ontario. To be perfectly frank, we were involved at that time with some, as they turned out to be, unsuccessful negotiations around the Meech Lake accord. The leader of the government at the time, my friend and colleague David Peterson, did not feel it would be helpful beginning what could very well be seen to be a trade war with our major partner in the old empire of the St Lawrence, namely the province of Quebec, at that time. But that was then and this is now, and the irritation has gone on unabated.

The member for Ottawa-Rideau cited some very good examples that I think most of us, whether you're the member for Cornwall, the member for Nepean, the member for Ottawa South, Ottawa Centre, would be able to cite, and I could cite as well.

There is, as I mentioned a moment ago, a connection between Ontario and Quebec at a place called Rapides-des-Joachims. It's a small, wonderful community in Quebec that is almost landlocked — effectively landlocked — from the rest of that part of Quebec province. Most of the servicing of Rapides-des-Joachims is done through the Highway 17 corridor, with people coming up from Pembroke through Deep River and crossing at Rolphton. I'm telling you, business people from Ontario who have been serving that community over the time I've been here being harassed for delivering oil or petroleum products on winter days to people who are five and 10 miles away from an Ontario location and 60, 70 miles away from a Quebec location — it is just absolute nonsense. It's madness on stilts. As I said earlier, it has sorely tested the patience of fair-minded Canadians, not just in Ontario but in Quebec as well.

The other day, at the regional council in Pontiac county, hundreds of upset Quebecers were petitioning their local government to do something to make Quebec City respond to the pressures that are building in west Quebec, because there are tens of thousands of fair-minded Canadians living in west Quebec who understand the madness and the stupidity of this border dispute that's gone on, as I said, for as long as I've been here.

It strikes many of us as particularly irksome that there appears to be freer trade between Quebec and New England than there is between Quebec and Ontario. I repeat: it strikes many of us as especially irritating and irksome that there appears to be freer trade between Quebec province and New England than there is between Ontario and Quebec. That is simply unacceptable.

I agree with Dalton McGuinty who said — I believe it was my leader — that this is not going to be easy. We have, happily, a very active and expanding economy and there are thousands of non-unionized construction workers, many of them living in Quebec and working in

Ontario, who are going to be badly hurt by this. There are going to be very real pressures in southeastern Ontario especially. I suspect my friend from Carleton would know better than I, but I read in the *Ottawa Citizen*, for example, that the residential construction activity in Ottawa-Carleton is pretty good right now.

I'm going to tell you, Bill 17, which I support, is not going to be without its consequences. There will be consequences, and those of us who support this bill are all going to have to be prepared to confront some pretty unhappy workers and businesses. I, for my part, am willing to do so and I expect all members who support this bill will do so as well.

I noted in the *Ottawa Sun* the other day a columnist whose name I can't remember chastizing the Harris government for not doing a great deal thus far.

Mr Cullen: It was the editor.

Mr Conway: Was it the editor?

Mr Cullen: Yes, it was the editor.

Mr Conway: I forget the columnist. It was a column.

Mr Cullen: It was Richard Gibbons.

Mr Conway: I think that sounds like the name, indeed.

The fact of the matter is, to apply the force of this bill is going to produce real consequences, but I don't know of any other way, quite frankly.

I noticed the editorial in the *Globe and Mail* of a couple of weeks ago, a thoughtful column by Andrew Coyne in the *Black press* which suggested — certainly the *Globe* suggested — that Ontario should avail itself of the dispute resolution mechanisms under the internal agreement on trade signed by several Canadian provinces.

The people I represent, and quite frankly I myself, come at it a bit more practically. Like the Minister of Labour, I have played sports. I didn't play as well as he did. I certainly didn't play on any ivy league hockey team, but I played a lot of hockey in my time. My rule always was, I will play by whatever rule my opponent chooses, but if my opponent chooses the rule that in this case Quebec has chosen around mobility issues, then, without much announcement, I am simply going to apply that very same rule to my opponent, and I'd probably want to add 5%.

And I'm not going to make any big announcement either, because my experience in these matters is that it's not what you say, it's what you do. I want action that is going to be more felt than seen or heard. If that makes me a hawk, so be it, because I am tired of trying to explain and defend evidently ridiculous and unfair practices applied throughout the Ottawa River corridor.

Seven score years ago our forebears met at Quebec City and Charlottetown to create the Canadian federation, and they did so in large measure because they wanted to create a free trade zone among the provinces of all British North America. That was a very key aspect of what they were about in the mid-19th century. Well, the time has come for this Legislature to show the people of eastern Ontario and western Quebec, northeastern Ontario and northwestern Quebec, that we still accept and sup-

port the economic union, the free trade zone that was established at Charlottetown, Quebec and London some 130 years ago. I am not happy that we are forced to this point, but we have been patient to a fault. The time for response has arrived.

2120

Let me say again, and in conclusion, I am under no illusions that the passage of this legislation is going to have a serious impact, I suspect almost immediately, on the residential construction business, in the national capital area especially. I applaud the current government for the aggressive approach they've taken in the application of the several Ontario provincial tax policies that have been flirted with and flouted for too many years. I think, from what I'm hearing along the Ottawa River frontier, that that more aggressive application of tax collection and tax application is having the desired effect.

I hope and I pray that good sense and good judgment are going to bring people, particularly in Quebec City, to their senses and that we will find a way to negotiate a true and lasting peace on this matter. But I stand here tonight to say that I'm no longer prepared to accept the bland assurances offered me by previous governments that negotiation is going to be the be-all and end-all. It hasn't worked. It is now time to do what we ought to do tonight, which is give full and speedy passage of second and third reading to Bill 17, standing in the name of the Minister of Labour.

Hon Mr Sterling: I come to this debate after a long history of being involved in this because I introduced the first resolution dealing with this particular matter on May 6, 1993. This Legislature passed that particular resolution, and that resolution said we wanted to fight fire with fire. I was disappointed in the day because there was only one member from the Liberal Party from eastern Ontario who voted for that resolution, and that was Hans Daigeler, who is no longer with us here in the Legislature or on this earth. I was astounded, quite frankly, at that time that Liberal members didn't consider this issue that important to be here to support me and support Ontario workers in bringing this matter forward.

A week later the member for Ottawa East, Mr Grandmaître, brought forward a resolution that didn't say "fight fire with fire" but said "let's talk some more." In fact Mr Grandmaître, in referring to me, said he didn't believe in fighting fire with fire. But I believed even back then that we should progress very aggressively.

Then in September 1993, the NDP government brought forward Bill 123 and all members of this Legislature passed it on first and on second reading. It was referred to committee over the winter session. In and about February 1994, I got a call from the then Minister of Labour, Frances Lankin, who said that they had struck a deal with the province of Quebec to resolve the problems that we were having with regard to workers crossing the border. I was very happy that we didn't have to pass Bill 123 through third reading and into law because it appeared that we had a deal.

Then when we came to power, in 1995 or 1996 Elizabeth Witmer, who was then the Minister of Labour, brought forward another agreement with Quebec because the first agreement was failing. I was hopeful that that agreement would work as well, in terms of having some reciprocity between the two provinces.

In 1996, Mr Lalonde brought forward his bill. Unfortunately, his bill was fatally flawed in that it had obligatory unionization of our workers, it did not have retail sales tax enforcement and it didn't cover the aggregate haulers. The fact of the matter is that that bill didn't cover the areas where a lot of the aggravation was.

We also had an agreement in place at that time and we were hoping it would work, but it didn't. This was drawn to my attention when I was with Premier Harris on March 31 when he announced that we would go ahead with this bill and he produced that bill for all members of the public at that time. I talked to an electrical contractor who had talked with one of his friends from Pontiac county up in the west part of Quebec. Both being electrical contractors, they said to each other: "Why don't we both apply for a licence to do business in each other's province, because we don't do that now, and we'll try to do it. Let's see what kind of roadblocks would be put in our way in order to carry on business in the other province."

The fellow from Pontiac county in Quebec applied to get his licence in the province of Ontario. It took him 48 hours and cost him \$200 to get a licence to do business in our province. When I talked to the fellow from Ontario trying to go across into Quebec and do electrical contracting work, he had been at it for four and a half weeks, had not yet got his licence approved and was continuing to come up against roadblocks. At that point in time he had spent over \$2,000 to try to get a licence to do business in Quebec.

I was really pleased when the Minister of Labour came up to Ottawa-Carleton and eastern Ontario to talk to the contractors, to talk to the aggregate haulers, to talk to the carpenters and the workers from both sides of our border, the Ottawa River, and try to iron out disputes and deal with this issue.

I'm very proud that our Premier and our Minister of Labour have taken this tough stand. I sat at the table with the Premier and he was talking to some of the people who were going to be affected on the Ontario side by this legislation. I heard the Premier say to the contractors who are going to be affected by this legislation, "It's going to be tough on you for awhile." The Ottawa contractors, who had some Quebec workers working for them and understood that indeed there was going to be a problem, said: "Yes, we know there is going to be tough medicine for us to take when this legislation is put forward, but we know it must be done." Not only do we believe very strongly in this legislation, we also believe that our people are ready for it in terms of dealing with it even though it may disadvantage them in a financial way for a short period of time.

It's my hope that the Minister of Labour, with this piece of legislation, will be able to negotiate and enforce a lasting agreement which will actually work on the ground. As the member for Renfrew North, Mr Conway, has said, it's really important that it work on the ground.

A lot of politicians have worked on this problem over a long period of time: members of the NDP, members of the Liberal Party, members of the Conservative Party. We've all been involved. Some people say it didn't happen soon enough, it's too late, it's too little, and all the rest of it. But this is the first time that we have really come to the House and said as a Legislature: "We're going to pass this bill, we're going to make it law and we're going to enforce this law."

I just want to thank each and every member who has been involved in this, including the Minister of Labour and our Premier, for their tremendous contribution, their tremendous courage in bringing this bill forward. I believe that once it's passed we will start to see reciprocity, that our workers will have the opportunity to go across the bridge and do some work in Quebec like the Quebec workers have that right to come to our province.

2130

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Further debate? The member for Ottawa East.

Mr Bernard Grandmaitre (Ottawa East): In listening to the member for Carleton —

The Speaker: You know what? The Liberals don't have any time left. Do you want to give him your time?

Hon Mr Sterling: No. He's going to criticize me.

The Speaker: All right.

Mr Grandmaitre: Mr Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr Bisson: He can have our time.

Mr Cullen: On a point of order, Mr Speaker.

The Speaker: I heard you. Just hang on for a second. If you want the NDP time, then ask for consent.

Mr Grandmaitre: I ask for unanimous consent to share the NDP time.

The Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Mr Bisson: We want 5,000 votes in return from your riding.

Mr Grandmaitre: Five thousand votes. It's a deal. It's sold because you're going to need a hell of a lot more than 5,000 votes.

I'm delighted to join in this debate at the late hour for the simple reason that we're all busy, it's getting close to election time, but I couldn't help listening to the member for Carleton reminding us of 1993. What the member for Carleton is forgetting is that back in 1992 I introduced a resolution that he voted for. He voted for it. Back on March 6, 1992, you voted for it. It was accepted unanimously. But it was a resolution, not a bill. I was in the opposition, Norm, and you voted for it.

Hon Mr Sterling: Yes.

Mr Grandmaitre: You remember.

The debate at that time, Mr Speaker — I must be very honest with you — was not about labour issues, it was about linguistic issues. I remember the Minister of Agriculture and also the member for Carleton standing in

their place and saying, "It's about time that we put Quebecers where they belong." This was not the intention of my resolution. My resolution was a very simple move, and that was to find a decent resolution to solve the problem.

I had met with the Minister of Labour and with Frances Lankin, the member for Beaches-Woodbine, and we came to an agreement with the Minister of Labour, M. Tremblay, if I'm not mistaken. We had signed the agreement in the city of Hull.

At that time we were resolved to find a solution, except that the members in the opposition in those days didn't have the same intentions we did. It was a fight between Ontario and Quebec. It wasn't about labour. It wasn't about a friendly relationship. It was about a linguistic issue.

Hon Mr Sterling: Oh, get off it.

Mr Grandmaître: Maybe you don't like it, but I'm telling the truth.

They shied away. We had a number of occasions to meet with the Minister of Labour, Mrs Witmer, and M. Lalonde. I can tell you that they had all the answers. It was within weeks. Then what we found out two weeks after, when I was getting in touch with our Ontario office in the province of Quebec, in Quebec City, was they had closed the office. They had closed the office in Quebec City. We had nobody to talk to in Quebec City.

When I hear the member for Carleton talking about his 1993 exploitation, I feel sorry for him because with his great memory and his great experience in this House, he must be responsible for his previous actions. He's trying to run away from his past. He's trying to run away from it.

Interjection: He can't run away from his past.

Mr Grandmaître: Absolutely. Selective memory.

My colleague from Prescott and Russell took up the slack and introduced a private member's bill. I must congratulate him. It wasn't very popular at the time because, let's face it, the government and the opposition had different views on how to resolve it. Mr Lalonde had the fortitude to introduce his bill and again we had support from the opposition and also from the government members.

We are close to an election and this is why the government of Ontario, with a very bland agenda, waited until the 11th hour to introduce Bill 17 for second and third readings. I will be supporting Bill 17 in second and third readings but, to be very honest with you, I don't have the same gut feeling that I had back in 1992. I'm doing it today because I want to resolve the situation. I want to give Ontarians the opportunity to work in their province and also in the province of Quebec.

Depuis 1992 on parle de trouver une solution à nos problèmes qui concernent la mobilité de nos travailleurs dans le domaine de la construction. C'est peut-être ma dernière occasion d'adresser la parole dans cette Chambre, mais je veux être certain d'appuyer et de féliciter mon collègue de Prescott et Russell qui a présenté ce projet de loi d'intérêt privé.

Certains projets de loi sont laissés de côté, mais celui de M. Lalonde était un projet de loi de coeur qui voulait trouver une solution très précaire, entre deux provinces : le Québec et l'Ontario.

Monsieur le Président, je vais appuyer les deuxième et troisième lectures, mais par contre, laissez-moi vous dire que j'ai une petite tache, une petite tache au coeur, mais j'ai une bonne mémoire des actions du gouvernement.

The Speaker: Further debate? None.

Mr Flaherty has moved second reading of Bill 17. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Pursuant to the order of the House made earlier today, this bill is ordered referred to the committee of the whole House.

House in committee of the whole.

FAIRNESS IS A TWO-WAY STREET ACT (CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY), 1999

LOI DE 1999 PORTANT QUE LA JUSTICE N'EST PAS À SENS UNIQUE (MOBILITÉ DE LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE DANS L'INDUSTRIE DE LA CONSTRUCTION)

Consideration of Bill 17, An Act respecting Labour Mobility in the Construction Industry aimed at Restricting Access to Those Taking Advantage of Ontario's Policy of Free Mobility / Projet de loi 17, Loi sur la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre dans l'industrie de la construction visant à restreindre l'accès de ceux qui profitent de la politique de libre mobilité de l'Ontario.

The Second Deputy Chair (Ms Marilyn Churley):

Are there any amendments to this bill and, if so, to which section?

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): The amendments to the bill are to section 10 and section 26.

The Second Deputy Chair: Questions or comments on sections 1 through 9? No? Shall sections 1 through 9 carry? Carried.

Section 10, Mr Bisson.

Mr Gilles Bisson (Cochrane South): I move that subsection 10(1) of the bill be amended by inserting "harvesting or transporting timber or engaging in the exploration of minerals" after the word "work".

I've already submitted copies to both the other parties and the table.

The Second Deputy Chair: Mr Bisson has moved that subsection 10(1) of the bill be amended by inserting "harvesting or transporting timber or engaging in the exploration of minerals" after "work".

2140

Mr Bisson: I want to take a couple of minutes to explain what this particular amendment does. If you take a look at section 10 of the bill, if you read section 10 under part II, the construction workers part of the act, it says:

"Every individual who is a person resident in a designated jurisdiction and who is or will be doing construc-

tion work in a designated area shall register with the office.”

It goes through to explain that they have to register with the director. What we're asking for in this part of the bill is not to limit it just to people in the construction trades, namely, the construction industry, but to include in that scope of the bill people who are employed in harvesting and transporting timber, and also those people employed and those people operating what is considered to be equipment within the exploration of minerals definition.

Where we're getting at, as I said earlier in my comments, is that we understand the problem in the Ottawa area. We also have that problem to an extent in north-eastern Ontario when it comes to Quebec contractors and Quebec construction workers coming to Ontario and having unequal access to our jobs and our contracts, and it's not vice versa when you go to the Quebec side of the border.

What we're asking the government to do is to accept this amendment as a friendly amendment to the bill. We're asking that we also look at the forest industry and at the mining industry so that those people who are contractors in those two industries in the harvesting of timber and the transportation — that would mean anybody who has a feller-buncher, anybody who is basically employed in the harvesting of timber, all those people who are transporting timber, in other words, truckers — would be treated the same in this law as they are in the construction industry so that you don't have unequal treatment of workers from Quebec to Ontario when it comes to the timber industry.

On the side of the mining industry, as I mentioned earlier, we have a growing problem where we have people with significant investments in equipment in the drilling field, in the drilling equipment such as diamond drill equipment, who are sitting idle and no work is being done with their equipment. At the same time you've got Quebec contractors in Ontario, working with their drills and displacing Ontario workers and contractors.

The big problem is, when the Ontario workers or the Ontario drilling contractors try to go into Quebec to get work that's there — in the case of the mining industry there's significant work in the diamond drill exploration community that cannot get to the Quebec side of the border because if they are successful, first of all, to get a bid, they are harassed once they go into Quebec by the QPP, the Ministry of Labour and others, in the province of Quebec and they are not able to stay there and complete the work they've done.

I was contacted just recently where somebody from Kapuskasing was telling me the other day that they had got a small contract in northern Quebec. They weren't on the job site for more than two days and basically they were starting to be harassed by the provincial Ministry of Labour and the QPP. They really felt that if they stayed things were only going to progressively get worse, so they just packed up their bags and came back to Ontario.

That is not fair because it's one thing for Quebec workers and companies to come to Ontario; we need to make sure that Ontario contractors and workers can also go to Quebec and do the same.

Our amendment, as I said, we view as a friendly amendment and we ask the government to support the amendment as it would do basically the same thing you're doing for the construction trades.

The Second Deputy Chair: Are there any other comments?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour): I appreciate the member's amendment, and we did have a chance to talk about it briefly. The draft bill has been available since March 31. I have not had an opportunity to see this amendment until tonight. I tell you, there may well be merit to the proposed amendment that the member opposite brings forward. I am concerned that the process we have followed with respect to Bill 17 has been a cautious consultation process in which we have made every effort to have open doors, to travel to eastern Ontario, to meet with union representatives, to meet with truckers, suppliers, contractors and workers, unionized and non-unionized, up and down the Ottawa Valley and in the Ottawa-Carleton area, Cumberland, Hawkesbury and so on.

I have not had that same opportunity with respect to the issues raised by the member opposite with respect to timber and mining. The member may well be right that these are areas in which there is a disparity in treatment between our neighbours in Quebec and Ontario. They may well be issues that the negotiators should explore. I will certainly instruct our negotiator to raise these issues also in the discussions that are taking place, because we do believe at the end of the day in a negotiated resolution of this issue.

At this stage, without that type of listening and that type of consultation within northeastern Ontario, I hesitate to move forward with respect to this idea, which may well be meritorious. It may well be necessary in the future to address them, after we have dealt with the construction mobility issue.

Mr Bisson: I don't want to debate this ad infinitum. We're time-allocated to 25 minutes in committee of the whole and we have another amendment to come forward. I just want to say to the Minister of Labour that the bill was printed on March 30, so I can't believe there has been all that much discussion within the construction trades and the contractors on this particular issue. I don't see how you should treat those people in the timber industry and the mining industry any differently. I would ask you again to reconsider and to support this amendment. I think it's important for not only the people in northeastern Ontario, but also people engaged in those industries in eastern Ontario.

Mr Jean-Marc Lalonde (Prescott and Russell): I just want to refer to the comment that both Ministers Villeneuve and Sterling mentioned a little while ago. First of all I want to refer to the comment of Minister Villeneuve. He said that he heard a radio interview with

Radio-Canada in March while he was driving on the 401, and that I said it was unconstitutional to come up with this bill. The bill was not produced at the time; we received a copy of the bill only last Wednesday. So there's no way at the time that he could have said that I said that, because at that time the minister was saying they would make sure all Quebec construction workers were going to get an Ontario competency card. It is unconstitutional when you decide to have outsiders get a card if you don't have a card system for your own employees.

On the other point that Minister Sterling just said a little while ago, about the taxation, you don't have to include this in the bill, because you have the sales tax guide 804 that is already in place that you people have never put in force. If this had been enforced in 1995, it would have been all over.

The Second Deputy Chair: Mr Lalonde, just one moment. You have to speak to the amendment.

Mr Lalonde: Thank you.

The Second Deputy Chair: Any other comments on the amendment?

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): Very briefly, there's no question that the timber trade is also an issue. I simply want to say on behalf of the people I represent in the upper Ottawa Valley that it does represent a concern. I'm quite happy to have the matter investigated further, but I would certainly support the amendment to the extent that it is an issue, it is an irritation and I would want some very serious consideration, if not now, at some appropriate and timely point in the not-too-distant future.

Hon Mr Flaherty: In response to my friend opposite in the New Democratic Party, the consultations, of course, have taken place for more than a year now with respect to the issues that have been debated in this House tonight. That's very important, and I'm sure my friend agrees that we should not act precipitously in these matters; we should ensure that we consult and listen to all sides before coming to this House with a proposed piece of legislation. Some consultation, some thought and some reflection have been given in developing the bill.

As I say, my friend may well be right that in the future other areas may need to be explored in a legislative way. I would hope they'd be successfully resolved in a negotiated way.

2510

The Second Deputy Chair: Are there any other comments?

Shall Mr Bisson's amendment to section 10 carry? All those in favour, please say "aye." Those opposed, please say "nay." In my opinion, the ayes have it.

Call in the members. There will be a five-minute vote.

Interjections: Stacked.

The Second Deputy Chair: This vote is stacked.

Questions or comments on sections 11 through 26? No.

Shall sections 11 through 26 carry? Carried.

Mr Cullen, you were going to move an amendment.

Mr Cullen: I have an addition to section 26.

I move that the bill be amended by adding the following section:

"Firm measures

"26.1(1) This section applies with respect to a designated jurisdiction if, by April 1, 2000, Ontario and that jurisdiction have not entered into an agreement with respect to barriers to working and doing business in that jurisdiction because of unfair, discriminatory or restrictive practices in that jurisdiction.

"Prohibition, individuals

"(2) No individual who is a person resident in a designated jurisdiction shall work in construction in Ontario or supply services relating to construction in Ontario.

"Same, employers

"(3) No person shall employ an individual who is a person resident in a designated jurisdiction to work in construction in Ontario or to supply services relating to construction in Ontario.

"Re-employment of injured worker

"(4) An employer who re-employs an individual in accordance with section 41 of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997, and the individual who is re-employed under that section shall be deemed not to contravene subsection (2) or (3).

"Application for exemption

"(5) An individual and an employer may apply to a director for an exemption from subsections (2) and (3).

"Same

"(6) The director shall grant the exemption if the employer demonstrates,

"(a) that the individuals skills are necessary in the conduct of the employer's operations and

"(b) that, because of a shortage of those skills, no other resident of Canada is available to carry out the work.

"Shortage of skills

"(7) The employer shall use the prescribed criteria and methods to demonstrate the existence of a shortage of skills.

"Duration of exemption

"(8) The exemption applies for the lesser of one year and the period during which the employer needs the individual's skills.

"Renewal of exemption

"(9) An exemption may be renewed.

"Offence

"(10) Every person who contravenes or fails to comply with subsection (2) or (3) is guilty of an offence and on conviction,

"(a) in the case of a corporation, is liable to a fine of not more than \$25,000;

"(b) in the case of a person who is not a corporation, is liable to a fine of not more than \$2,000.

"Regulations

"(11) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations,

"(a) prescribing criteria and methods for the purpose of subsection (7); and

"(b) exempting from the application of subsections (2) and (3) such class of employer or employee, doing such type of construction, in such parts of Ontario and in such circumstances, as the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers appropriate, having regard to exemptions by a designated jurisdiction from the application or operation of its laws or practices to a class of employer or employee or a type of construction.

"Definitions

"(12) In this section,

"designated jurisdiction' means a designated jurisdiction if the circumstances set out in subsection (1) apply to it; ('territoire désigné')

"director' means an inspector who is appointed as a director for the purposes of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. ('directeur')

The Second Deputy Chair: Are there any comments?

Mr Cullen: What I have moved is essentially Bill 123. Bill 123 was as short as I read it out. I have passed copies to both the government and the opposition. They have copies of this amendment.

What we are doing here is, Bill 17, as presented by the Minister of Labour, does provide for construction contractors from a designated jurisdiction to register with the Jobs Protection Office; it does require construction workers to register with the Jobs Protection Office; it does prohibit the government of Ontario from awarding construction contracts; it does deal with people hauling aggregate in Ontario etc.

However, these are just impediments to people conducting business in Ontario in the construction industry from a designated jurisdiction, ie, the province of Quebec. If this is not successful in bringing Quebec to the bargaining table, then I feel we need to have something in our pocket, and that something in our pocket is Bill 123, which this House passed unanimously on first and second reading back in 1993.

The amendment I have moved says that as of April 1, 2000, if there is not that agreement, the government can then move to the provisions of Bill 123, in other words, designate a jurisdiction, in this case Quebec, and simply say that no one from that jurisdiction can work in our construction industry. That is what Bill 123 said, and that is what this amendment does. If we have an agreement at the table, then this amendment is moot; if there is no agreement at the table, the government can choose to exercise this amendment. In the subsection, you will see that the Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulation. So the government will have the ability to choose to pull that trigger. But without it, and no agreement, we have nothing. I believe we should have something.

I can tell you that back in 1993 Bill 123 did bring the government of Quebec to the table. So let's not set up something that may not work. We know Bill 123 did work. We're going to give the government a chance, assuming this government gets re-elected — the next government, any government coming in after the election — to make this work, and if it doesn't, then I believe this thing is perfectly in order and should be available to it.

The Acting Speaker: Any other comments?

Hon Mr Flaherty: I appreciate the comments of the member for Ottawa West.

The purpose of the legislation, as the Premier has made clear, is to mirror the impact of the Quebec situation in Ontario. What the member is proposing, what he is lifting from Bill 123, the NDP bill from 1993, I believe, is draconian. It would prohibit any person resident in a designated jurisdiction from working in construction in Ontario. Leaving aside for a moment the constitutionality of a provision like that, it would go beyond mirroring the impact of the Quebec situation, which as a policy question I would not propose.

Having said that, Bill 123 certainly was an effort by the New Democratic Party government of the day to address this issue back in 1993. Indeed, the Management Board directive the NDP cabinet put forward back in 1993 is similar to what we did earlier this spring with respect to public contracts.

The bill before the House is measured with respect to the steps that may be taken with respect to construction workers. It is intentionally measured. It also provides a degree of flexibility to Ontario contractors. It is intentional that there be a degree of flexibility so that hopefully we can ensure that our contractors in Ontario are affected minimally with respect to the legislation if it's passed.

Those are the reasons why I have some difficulty with the proposed amendment, allowing at the same time that if negotiations are unsuccessful it may be necessary at a later time to move further.

Mr Lalonde's private member's bill similarly was different from the government bill, Bill 17, in that it required forced unionization of Ontario workers. It did not deal with aggregates, and it did not deal with the retail sales tax issue, which is what we heard in our consultations. We certainly heard that the retail sales tax issue was a major issue. The Ministry of Finance inspectors, who have been taking significant action of late in eastern Ontario, are finding that what we heard on the ground is indeed so. So those are different aspects of the legislation.

I thank the member for his amendment.

Mr Conway: I would like to speak to the amendment. I agree with the minister basically, although I would take a slightly different posture on some of his collateral comments.

My own belief has to be, and would be, that on a number of issues, like the application of the Ontario retail sales tax regime, we have had for a long time the administrative possibility, and for whatever good reason or bad we did not apply those. They are now being applied and I strongly support the government in that connection.

Not all of the sanctions we need are legislative. We have simply over the years chosen not to apply a wide array of administrative applications and sanctions that I could imagine, like the rigorous application of trucking rules, for example; or the rigorous application of the provincial sales tax regime, or the even more rigorous

application of workers' compensation rules and inspections. Oh, one would not have to be Irish or creative to imagine a number of non-legislative applications that we could apply.

On the amendment, I agree with the minister that we have before us a bill that, from what I can tell and from what I have read, seeks to do a number of very discrete things that mirror activities currently being applied in the province of Quebec against Ontario business and Ontario labour.

I think we should pass this bill. I'm quite prepared to consider the Bisson amendment because the lumber and timber issues are real in my area. But I would not favour this amendment, Mr Cullen's amendment, because I think it anticipates failure. It might be viewed as pre-emptive, provocative, premature, and for those reasons I would not favour it at this time, I say to my quizzical friend the Attorney General.

Mr Cullen: I understand people's hesitation, but people have to remember that this only comes into play April 1, 2000, and is at the government's discretion. In terms of it being pre-emptive, provocative, what have you, I wish whoever gets elected — certainly if we are elected we know that we are able to speak to this issue because of our concerns in terms of protecting people's jobs and livelihood, workplace safety and all those issues that are important to both provinces and to workers in both provinces.

I want to remind my colleagues here, did not members of all three parties support this unanimously in 1993? The record is very clear: The Liberal side did, yes; the Tory side did, yes. So here's a situation where it was successful in bringing Quebec to the table.

Where we're venturing with this bill we don't know. So far the government of Quebec has not responded to any of the government's initiatives, no matter how much the government has trumpeted these things. I don't want people sitting out there feeling their problems have been resolved when we have no reaction whatsoever. This is something that all parties agreed to and it's at the government's discretion to bring into play.

I don't know what you're afraid of, but my community wants to see some resolution. Don't back off. Don't back down. Do it right.

The Second Deputy Chair: Are there any other comments?

Shall Mr Cullen's amendment adding new section 26.1 carry?

All those in favour of the motion, please say "aye."

Those opposed, please say "nay."

In my opinions, the nays have it.

The amendment is lost.

Shall sections 27 through 29 carry? Carried.

Shall the preamble carry? Carried.

Shall the title carry? Carried.

Call in the members; a five-minute bell.

The division bells rang from 2204 to 2207.

The Second Deputy Chair: Mr Bisson has moved an amendment to section 10.

All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

All those opposed, please rise.

Clerk Assistant (Ms Deborah Deller): The ayes are 8; the nays are 32.

The Second Deputy Chair: I declare the amendment lost.

Shall section 10 carry? Carried.

Shall the bill carry? Carried.

Shall I report the bill to the House? Agreed.

Hon Norman W. Sterling (Minister of the Environment, Government House Leader): I move the committee rise and report.

The Second Deputy Chair: Is it the pleasure of the committee that the motion carry? Carried.

The committee of the whole House begs to report one bill without amendment and asks for leave to sit again.

The Acting Speaker (Ms Marilyn Churley): Shall the report be received and adopted? Agreed.

FAIRNESS IS A TWO-WAY STREET ACT (CONSTRUCTION LABOUR MOBILITY), 1999

LOI DE 1999 PORTANT QUE LA JUSTICE N'EST PAS À SENS UNIQUE (MOBILITÉ DE LA MAIN-D'OEUVRE DANS L'INDUSTRIE DE LA CONSTRUCTION)

Mr Flaherty moved third reading of the following bill:

Bill 17, An Act respecting Labour Mobility in the Construction Industry aimed at Restricting Access to Those Taking Advantage of Ontario's Policy of Free Mobility / Projet de loi 17, Loi sur la mobilité de la main-d'oeuvre dans l'industrie de la construction visant à restreindre l'accès de ceux qui profitent de la politique de libre mobilité de l'Ontario.

The Speaker (Hon Chris Stockwell): Mr Flaherty?

Hon Jim Flaherty (Minister of Labour): No comment.

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Sean G. Conway (Renfrew North): I have just a very brief question.

The Speaker: Hold it, have we got an agreement? There's no agreement; OK.

Mr Conway: Trust me, I'm certainly not going to be long. I can tell you, a lot of people I represent would be very interested to hear from the minister tonight, as best he can tell the House and the people of eastern and northeastern Ontario, upon the passage of this bill — and it's being given royal assent, I suspect, some time between now and sunrise tomorrow morning — what will the implementation of the several provisions of Bill 17 be over the next, let us say, three to six months? Could the minister advise the House on the roll-out and the implementation of the bill that is now to be passed?

The Speaker: Further debate?

Mr Alex Cullen (Ottawa West): We're at the close of this, and I suspect we're at the close of the third session of the 36th Parliament. It is interesting how this bill is being moved through with the help and assistance of

the different members of this House, the different parties of this House. Contrast that with the beginning of this Parliament.

I look forward to the election. I look forward to a chance for accountability on the record.

This particular bill had its antecedents earlier, where there was all-party support dealing with this issue that affects particularly my community. I just wanted to end this session on that note.

The Speaker: Further debate? No further debate.

Mr Flaherty has moved third reading of Bill 17. Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion carry? Carried.

Be it resolved that the bill do now pass and be entitled as in the motion.

It now being marginally after 9:30 of the clock, this House stands adjourned until 1:30 of the clock tomorrow.

The House adjourned at 2212.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

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Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
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Bassett, Hon / L'hon Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	
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Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, David	Oriole	L	
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	
Cullen, Alex	Ottawa West / -Ouest	ND	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (Agriculture and Food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
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Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	parliamentary assistant (Rural Affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjointe parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward- Lennox-Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	parliamentary assistant (Colleges and Universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Environnement
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Grandmaître, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
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Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de la Santé
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Soins de longue durée, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Johnson, Hon / L'hon David	Don Mills	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	parliamentary assistant (Tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Leach, Hon / L'hon Al	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Lessard, Wayne	Windsor-Riverside	ND	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Children's Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (enfance)
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Travail
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLean, Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Blain K.	Nickel Belt	ND	
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
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Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	
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Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de la Santé
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	
Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
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Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (Privatisation)
Saunderson, William	Eglinton	PC	
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services correctionnels
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
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These lists appear in the first and last issues of each session and on the first Monday of each month. A list arranged by riding appears when space permits.

Ces listes figurent dans les premier et dernier numéros de chaque session et du premier lundi de chaque mois. Par contre, une liste des circonscriptions paraît si l'espace est disponible.

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3^e session, 36^e législature

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Legislative Assembly of Ontario Committees

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Comités de Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

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Index Guide

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Subject Index - The main entry is a subject heading followed by a list of members who spoke on the subject and page references. Subject headings that do not require speakers, e.g., Divisions (recorded vote), are followed by subheadings and page numbers only. Typical entries in this section appear as follows:

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French debates are grouped under the heading **French language debates/remarks** followed by subheading/s in French.

This index also provides **lists of bills** introduced during this session. Bills are listed alphabetically and numerically with a chronology of their stages of development.

Due to the limited number of committee meetings during this session, the **committee index** has been published with the House index on **pages 65-67**.

House and Committee Hansard issues and pages are numbered according to session. A list of issues, dates and page numbers for the third session of the 36th Parliament follows on page 3.

The **Subject** and **Speaker** sections of both indexes, as well as the **list of issues, dates and page numbers**, are also available on the Internet at <http://www.ontla.on.ca/>

Further information may be obtained by contacting the Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services index staff at 416-325-7410; 325-7411; 325-3708; FAX : 416-314-5870.

Notice à l'intention des usagers

Cet index est le fruit d'une analyse détaillée des débats en anglais et en français, dans la langue de l'intervention. Les interventions ne sont pas traduites.

Les vedettes sont arrangées avec leurs renvois par ordre alphabétique en deux sections : un index-matières et un index des intervenants.

Index-matières. La vedette principale est une vedette-matière suivie d'une liste des députés qui sont intervenus sur ce sujet avec les numéros des pages. Les vedettes-matières qui ne nécessitent pas d'intervenants (les votes, par exemple) sont suivies de sous-vedettes avec les numéros des pages. Les vedettes dans l'index-matières se présentent de la façon suivante:

Teachers. see also Principals and vice-principals
Johnson, D. , 284

Divisions (recorded vote)
Opposition day motions
Number 1 – Taxation (lost), 244

Index des intervenants. La vedette principale est le nom d'un ou d'une député(e) et de sa circonscription, suivi d'une liste des sujets abordés par ce ou cette député(e) avec le numéro des pages. Les vedettes dans cette section se présentent de la façon suivante:

Johnson, Hon. D. (PC, Don Mills)
Early childhood education
government funding, 21
Teachers, 248

Les interventions en français sont groupées sous la vedette-matière **French language debates / remarks**, suivie de sous-vedettes en français.

Cet index donne également une **liste des projets de loi** présentés pendant la session. Cette liste est établie par ordre alphabétique et par ordre numérique avec une chronologie des étapes de leur avancement.

Étant donné le nombre limité de réunions de comités, **l'index des comités** paraît avec l'index de la Chambre à la **pages 65-67**.

Les numéros et les pages du Journal des débats de la Chambre et des comités sont numérotés par session. La liste des numéros, des dates et des numéros de page pour la troisième session de la trente-sixième législature se trouve page 3

Sont également disponibles à l'Internet au : <http://www.ontla.on.ca/>, les sections des **sujets** et des **intervenant(e)s** de l'index, de même que **dossiers, dates et numéros de page**.

Pour avoir des renseignements complémentaires, veuillez communiquer avec le personnel de l'index du service du Journal des débats et d'interprétation au 416-325-7410; au 325-7411 ou au 325-3708; télécopieur: 416-314-5870.

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(22 April – 5 May 1999)

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Please note: May 4, 1999 was the last day of sitting of the House for the Third session of the 36th Parliament. However, the Legislative Assembly was dissolved by Proclamation on May 5, 1999.

Nota : Le 4 mai 1999 marque le dernier jour de la troisième session de la trente-sixième législature. Cependant la date officielle de dissolution de l'Assemblée législative, fixée par proclamation, est le 5 mai 1999.

COMMITTEE HANSARD

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Standing Committee on Regulations and Private Bills	T1	3 May 1999	1-4
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO*
ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

Lieutenant Governor / Lieutenant-gouverneure: Hon / L'hon Hilary M. Weston

Speaker / Président: Hon / L'hon Chris Stockwell

Clerk / Greffier: Claude L. DesRosiers

Clerk Assistant / Greffière adjointe: Deborah Deller

Clerks at the Table / Greffiers parlementaires: Todd Decker, Lisa Freedman

Sergeant-at-Arms / Sergent d'armes: Dennis Clark

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Agostino, Dominic	Hamilton East / -Est	L	
Amott, Ted	Wellington	PC	parliamentary assistant (Small Business) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur petites entreprises) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Baird, John R.	Nepean	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances
Barrett, Toby	Norfolk	PC	
Bartolucci, Rick	Sudbury	L	
Bassett, Hon / L'hon Isabel	St Andrew-St Patrick	PC	Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / ministre des Affaires civiques, de la Culture et des Loisirs
Beaubien, Marcel	Lambton	PC	
Bisson, Gilles	Cochrane South / -Sud	ND	deputy New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Boushy, Dave	Sarnia	PC	
Boyd, Marion	London Centre / -Centre	ND	
Bradley, James J.	St Catharines	L	deputy opposition leader, opposition House leader / chef adjoint de l'opposition, chef parlementaire de l'opposition
Brown, Jim	Scarborough West / -Ouest	PC	
Brown, Michael A.	Algoma-Manitoulin	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Caplan, David	Oriole	L	
Carr, Gary	Oakville South / -Sud	PC	
Carroll, Jack	Chatham-Kent	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Castrilli, Annamarie	Downsview	L	
Christopherson, David	Hamilton Centre / -Centre	ND	
Chudleigh, Ted	Halton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Richesses naturelles
Churley, Marilyn	Riverdale	ND	Second Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Deuxième Vice-Présidente du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Cleary, John C.	Cornwall	L	
Clement, Hon / L'hon Tony	Brampton South / -Sud	PC	Minister of Transportation / ministre des Transports
Colle, Mike	Oakwood	L	
Conway, Sean G.	Renfrew North / -Nord	L	
Cordiano, Joseph	Lawrence	L	
Crozier, Bruce	Essex South / -Sud	L	
Cullen, Alex	Ottawa West / -Ouest	ND	
Cunningham, Hon / L'hon Dianne	London North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, minister responsible for women's issues / ministre des Affaires intergouvernementales, ministre déléguée à la Condition féminine
Curling, Alvin	Scarborough North / -Nord	L	deputy opposition House leader / chef parlementaire adjoint de l'opposition

* At dissolution / au moment de la dissolution

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Danford, Harry	Hastings-Peterborough	PC	parliamentary assistant (Agriculture and Food) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjoint parlementaire (secteurs Agriculture et Alimentation) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
DeFaria, Carl	Mississauga East / -Est	PC	
Doyle, Ed	Wentworth East / -Est	PC	deputy government whip / whip adjoint du gouvernement
Duncan, Dwight	Windsor-Walkerville	L	
Ecker, Hon / L'hon Janet	Durham West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Community and Social Services / ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Elliott, Brenda	Guelph	PC	
Eves, Hon / L'hon Ernie L.	Parry Sound	PC	Deputy Premier, Minister of Finance / vice-premier ministre, ministre des Finances
Fisher, Barbara	Bruce	PC	parliamentary assistant (Rural Affairs) to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs / adjointe parlementaire (secteur Affaires rurales) du ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales
Flaherty, Hon / L'hon Jim	Durham Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Labour / ministre du Travail
Ford, Douglas B.	Etobicoke-Humber	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Fox, Gary	Prince Edward-Lennox-South Hastings / Prince Edward-Lennox-Hastings-Sud	PC	
Froese, Tom	St Catharines-Brock	PC	parliamentary assistant (Colleges and Universities) to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire (secteur collèges et universités) du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Galt, Doug	Northumberland	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of the Environment / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Environnement
Gerretsen, John	Kingston and The Islands / Kingston et Les Îles	L	chief opposition whip / whip en chef de l'opposition
Gilchrist, Steve	Scarborough East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – urban) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur urbain) du ministre des Affaires municipales et Logement
Grandmaitre, Bernard	Ottawa East / -Est	L	
Gravelle, Michael	Port Arthur	L	
Grimmett, Bill	Muskoka-Georgian Bay / Muskoka-Baie-Georgienne	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Chair of the Management Board of Canada / adjoint parlementaire du président du Conseil de gestion
Guzzo, Garry J.	Ottawa-Rideau	PC	
Hampton, Howard	Rainy River	ND	Leader of the New Democratic Party / chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Hardeman, Ernie	Oxford	PC	parliamentary assistant (Municipal affairs – rural) to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / adjoint parlementaire (Affaires municipales – secteur rural) du ministre des Affaires municipales et Logement
Harnick, Hon / L'hon Charles	Willowdale	PC	Attorney General, minister responsible for native affairs / procureur général, ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Harris, Hon / L'hon Michael D.	Nipissing	PC	Premier and President of the Executive Council / premier ministre et président du Conseil exécutif
Hastings, John	Etobicoke-Rexdale	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Transportation / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Transports
Hodgson, Hon / L'hon Chris	Victoria-Haliburton	PC	Chair of the Management Board of Cabinet, Minister of Northern Development and Mines, deputy government House leader / Président du Conseil de gestion, ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines, vice-leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Hoy, Pat	Essex-Kent	L	
Hudak, Tim	Niagara South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de la Santé
Jackson, Hon / L'hon Cameron	Burlington South / -Sud	PC	Minister of Long-Term Care, minister responsible for seniors / ministre des Soins de longue durée, ministre délégué aux Affaires des personnes âgées

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Johns, Helen	Huron	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Johnson, Bert	Perth	PC	Deputy Speaker and Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Vice-Président de la Chambre et Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Johnson, Hon / L'hon David	Don Mills	PC	Minister of Education and Training / ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Johnson, Ron	Brantford	PC	
Jordan, W. Leo	Lanark-Renfrew	PC	parliamentary assistant (Tourism) to the Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / adjoint parlementaire (secteur Tourisme) du ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Kells, Morley	Etobicoke-Lakeshore	PC	
Kennedy, Gerard	York South / -Sud	L	
Klees, Frank	York-Mackenzie	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Community and Social Services / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Services sociaux et communautaires
Kormos, Peter	Welland-Thorold	ND	
Kwinter, Monte	Wilson Heights	L	
Lalonde, Jean-Marc	Prescott and Russell / Prescott et Russell	L	
Lankin, Frances	Beaches-Woodbine	ND	chief New Democratic Party whip / whip en chef du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Leach, Hon / L'hon Al	St George-St David	PC	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing / ministre des Affaires municipales et du Logement
Leadston, Gary L.	Kitchener-Wilmot	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Lessard, Wayne	Windsor-Riverside	ND	
Marchese, Rosario	Fort York	ND	
Marland, Hon / L'hon Margaret	Mississauga South / -Sud	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Children's Issues) / ministre sans portefeuille (enfance)
Martel, Shelley	Sudbury East / -Est	ND	
Martin, Tony	Sault Ste Marie	ND	deputy New Democratic Party whip / whip adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Martiniuk, Gerry	Cambridge	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Attorney General / adjoint parlementaire du procureur général
Maves, Bart	Niagara Falls	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Travail
McGuinty, Dalton	Ottawa South / -Sud	L	Leader of the Opposition / chef de l'opposition
McLean, Allan K.	Simcoe East / -Est	PC	
McLeod, Lyn	Fort William	L	
Miclash, Frank	Kenora	L	deputy opposition whip / whip adjoint de l'opposition
Morin, Blain K.	Nickel Belt	ND	
Morin, Gilles E.	Carleton East / -Est	L	First Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House / Premier Vice-Président du Comité plénier de l'Assemblée législative
Munro, Julia	Durham-York	PC	
Murdoch, Bill	Grey-Owen Sound	PC	
Mushinski, Marilyn	Scarborough-Ellesmere	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Premier / adjointe parlementaire du premier ministre
Newman, Dan	Scarborough Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Health / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre de la Santé
North, Peter	Elgin	Ind	
O'Toole, John R.	Durham East / -Est	PC	
Ouellette, Jerry J.	Oshawa	PC	
Palladini, Hon / L'hon Al	York Centre / -Centre	PC	Minister of Economic Development, Trade and Tourism / ministre du Développement économique, du Commerce et du Tourisme
Parker, John L.	York East / -Est	PC	parliamentary assistant to the minister responsible for native affairs / adjoint parlementaire du ministre délégué aux Affaires autochtones
Patten, Richard	Ottawa Centre / -Centre	L	

Member / Député(e)	Constituency / Circonscription	Party / Parti	Other responsibilities / Autres responsabilités
Pettit, Trevor	Hamilton Mountain	PC	
Phillips, Gerry	Scarborough-Agincourt	L	
Pouliot, Gilles	Lake Nipigon / Lac-Nipigon	ND	
Preston, Peter L.	Brant-Haldimand	PC	
Pupatello, Sandra	Windsor-Sandwich	L	
Ramsay, David	Timiskaming	L	
Rollins, E.J. Douglas	Quinte	PC	
Ross, Lillian	Hamilton West / -Ouest	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / adjointe parlementaire du ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Runciman, Hon / L'hon Robert W.	Leeds-Grenville	PC	Solicitor General and Minister of Correctional Services / solliciteur général et ministre des Services correctionnels
Ruprecht, Tony	Parkdale	L	
Sampson, Hon / L'hon Rob	Mississauga West / -Ouest	PC	Minister without Portfolio (Privatization) / ministre sans portefeuille (Privatisation)
Saunderson, William	Eglinton	PC	
Sergio, Mario	Yorkview	L	
Shea, Derwyn	High Park-Swansea	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Citizenship, Culture and Recreation / adjoint parlementaire de la ministre des Affaires civiles et de la Culture et des Loisirs
Sheehan, Frank	Lincoln	PC	
Silipo, Tony	Dovercourt	ND	deputy New Democratic Party leader / chef adjoint du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Skarica, Toni	Wentworth North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Correctional Services / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Services correctionnels
Smith, Bruce	Middlesex	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education and Training / adjoint parlementaire du ministre de l'Éducation et de la Formation
Snobelen, Hon / L'hon John	Mississauga North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Natural Resources / ministre des Richesses naturelles
Spina, Joseph	Brampton North / -Nord	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Northern Development and Mines / adjoint parlementaire du ministre du Développement du Nord et des Mines
Sterling, Hon / L'hon Norman W.	Carleton	PC	Minister of the Environment, government House leader / ministre de l'Environnement, leader parlementaire du gouvernement
Stewart, R. Gary	Peterborough	PC	assistant deputy government whip / whip adjoint suppléant du gouvernement
Stockwell, Hon / L'hon Chris	Etobicoke West / -Ouest	PC	Speaker / Président
Tascona, Joseph N.	Simcoe Centre / -Centre	PC	
Tilson, David	Dufferin-Peel	PC	
Tsubouchi, Hon / L'hon David H.	Markham	PC	Minister of Consumer and Commercial Relations / ministre de la Consommation et du Commerce
Turnbull, Hon / L'hon David	York Mills	PC	Minister without Portfolio, chief government whip / ministre sans portefeuille, whip en chef du gouvernement
Vankoughnet, Bill	Frontenac-Addington	PC	
Villeneuve, Hon / L'hon Noble	S-D-G & East Grenville / S-D-G et Grenville-Est	PC	Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, minister responsible for francophone affairs / ministre de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales, ministre délégué aux Affaires francophones
Wettlaufer, Wayne	Kitchener	PC	
Wildman, Bud	Algoma	ND	New Democratic Party House leader / chef parlementaire du Nouveau Parti démocratique
Wilson, Hon / L'hon Jim	Simcoe West / -Ouest	PC	Minister of Energy, Science and Technology / ministre de l'Énergie, des Sciences et de la Technologie
Witmer, Hon / L'hon Elizabeth	Waterloo North / -Nord	PC	Minister of Health / ministre de la Santé
Wood, Bob	London South / -Sud	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Solicitor General / adjoint parlementaire du solliciteur général
Wood, Len	Cochrane North / -Nord	ND	
Young, Terence H.	Halton Centre / -Centre	PC	parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Finance / adjoint parlementaire du ministre des Finances

Alphabetical List of Government Bills (short titles)

Automobile Insurance Consumer Protection Act, 1999 (Bill 21)
Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Child Welfare Reform), 1999 (Bill 6)
Christopher's Law (Sex Offender Registry), 1999 (Bill 19)
Fairness is a Two-Way Street Act (Construction Labour Mobility), 1999 (Bill 17)
Franchise Disclosure Act, 1999 (Bill 20)
Loan and Trust Corporations Amendment Act, 1999 (Bill 3)
Red Tape Reduction Act, 1999 (Bill 12)
Taxpayer Protection and Balanced Budget Act, 1999 (Bill 24)
Vintners Quality Alliance Act, 1999 (Bill 8)

Alphabetical List of Private Members' Public Bills (short titles)

Access to Occupations Act, 1999 (Bill 30)
Assessment Amendment Act, 1999 (Bill 33)
Consumer Protection Amendment Act, 1999 (Bill 23)
Education Amendment Act (Mould Contamination in Portable Classrooms), 1999 (Bill 4)
Endangered, Threatened and Vulnerable Species Act, 1999 (Bill 16)
Fair Gasoline Marketing Practices Act, 1999 (Bill 28)
Gas Price Watchdog Act, 1999 (Bill 27)
Gasoline Pricing Act, 1999 (Bill 22)
Health Care Accountability and Patients' Bill of Rights Act, 1999 (Bill 18)
Health Insurance Amendment Act, 1999 (Bill 13)
Lower Property Taxes in Sudbury Act, 1999 (Bill 11)
Medicine Amendment Act, 1999 (Bill 2)
Mental Health Amendment Act, 1999 (Bill 29)
Ministerial Travel Accountability Act, 1999 (Bill 7)
Nurses' Bill of Rights, 1999 (Bill 9)
Ontario College of Teachers Amendment Act, 1999 (Bill 14)
Protection of Children involved in Prostitution Act, 1999 (Bill 10)
Protection of Children on School Buses Act, 1999 (Bill 25)
Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk Statute Law Amendment Act, 1999 (Bill 31)
Saving Local Government in Norfolk and Haldimand Act, 1999 (Bill 15)
Student Health and Safety Programs Act, 1999 (Bill 32)
University of Ottawa Amendment Act, 1999 (Bill 5)
Women's Institute Week Act, 1999 (Bill 26)

Alphabetical List of Private Bills (short titles)

Canada Christian College and School of Graduate Theological Studies Act, 1999 (Bill Pr4)
City of Ottawa Act, 1999 (Bill Pr1)
City of Windsor Act, 1999 (Bill Pr7)
Columbus Club of Sault Ste. Marie Act, 1999 (Bill Pr8)
Peterborough Regional Health Centre Act, 1999 (Bill Pr3)

Numerical List of Government Bills (long titles)

- Bill 1 - An Act to perpetuate an Ancient Parliamentary Right - Hon M.D. Harris**
First reading 6.
- Bill 3 - An Act to amend the Loan and Trust Corporations Act - Hon E.L. Eves**
First reading 11. Second reading 192. Third reading 198. Royal assent 4 May 1999 (The Ontario Gazette, 22 May 1999, Vol 132-21).
- Bill 6 - An Act to amend the Child and Family Services Act in order to better promote the best interests, protection and well being of children - Hon J. Ecker**
First reading 12. Ministerial statement 13. Second reading 245. In committee 266. Third reading 271.
Royal assent 4 May 1999 (The Ontario Gazette, 22 May 1999, Vol 132-21).
- Bill 8 - An Act to provide for the designation of a wine authority to establish an appellation of origin system for Vintners Quality Alliance wine and to administer that system - Hon D.H. Tsubouchi**
First reading 12. Second reading 198. Third reading 203. Royal assent 4 May 1999 (The Ontario Gazette, 22 May 1999, Vol 132-21).
- Bill 12 - An Act to reduce red tape, to promote good government through better management of Ministries and agencies and to improve customer service by amending or repealing certain Acts and by enacting three new Acts - Hon. D.H. Tsubouchi**
First reading 69.
- Bill 17 - An Act respecting Labour Mobility in the Construction Industry aimed at Restricting Access to Those Taking Advantage of Ontario's Policy of Free Mobility - Hon J. Flaherty**
First reading 120. Ministerial statement 120. Second reading 297. In committee 322. Third reading 326.
Royal assent 4 May 1999 (The Ontario Gazette, 22 May 1999, Vol 132-21).
- Bill 19 - An Act, in memory of Christopher Stephenson, to establish and maintain a registry of sex offenders to protect children and communities - Hon R.W. Runciman**
First reading 120. Ministerial statement 122.
- Bill 20 - An Act to require fair dealing between parties to franchise agreements, to ensure that franchisees have the right to associate and to impose disclosure obligations on franchisors - Hon D.H. Tsubouchi**
First reading 120.
- Bill 21 - An Act to increase fairness and consumer protection while maintaining a balanced and stable automobile insurance plan in Ontario - Hon R. Sampson**
First reading 174.
- Bill 24 - An Act to protect taxpayers against tax increases, to establish a process requiring voter approval for proposed tax increases and to ensure that the Provincial Budget is a balanced budget - Hon M.D. Harris**
First reading 207. Ministerial statement 209.

Numerical List of Private Members' Public Bills (long titles)

- Bill 2 - An Act to amend the Medicine Act, 1991 - M. Kwinter**
First reading 11.
- Bill 4 - An Act to protect the health of pupils and teachers against the effects of Stachybotrys atra mould in portable classrooms by making amendments to the Education Act - B. Wildman**
First reading 11.
- Bill 5 - An Act to amend the University of Ottawa Act, 1965 - D. Caplan**
First reading 12.

Numerical List of Private Members' Public Bills (*continued*)

- Bill 7 - An Act respecting Accountability for Ministerial Travel - R. Bartolucci**
First reading 12.
- Bill 9 - An Act to protect the rights of nurses providing services in Ontario - R. Bartolucci**
First reading 12.
- Bill 10 - An Act to protect Children involved in Prostitution - R. Bartolucci**
First reading 13.
- Bill 11 - An Act relating to property taxes in Sudbury - R. Bartolucci**
First reading 13.
- Bill 13 - An Act to amend the Health Insurance Act to satisfy the criteria for contribution by the Government of Canada set out in the Canada Health Act - D. Duncan**
First reading 69.
- Bill 14 - An Act to increase teacher representation at the Ontario College of Teachers and to make other amendments to the Ontario College of Teachers Act, 1996 - B. Wildman**
First reading 70.
- Bill 15 - An Act to eliminate the regional level of municipal government in Norfolk and Haldimand, to cut duplication and to save taxpayers' money - T. Barrett**
First reading 70.
- Bill 16 - An Act to revise the Endangered Species Act and to protect Threatened and Vulnerable Species - B. Wildman**
First reading 119.
- Bill 18 - An Act to promote patients' rights and to increase accountability in Ontario's health care system - M. Boyd**
First reading 120.
- Bill 22 - An Act respecting the price of gasoline - J.J. Bradley**
First reading 174.
- Bill 23 - An Act to amend the Consumer Protection Act - B. Crozier**
First reading 174.
- Bill 25 - An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act to protect children while on school buses - P. Hoy**
First reading 208.
- Bill 26 - An Act to designate a week of recognition for the Women's Institute - B. Wildman**
First reading 208.
- Bill 27 - An Act respecting the price of motor vehicle fuel and the appointment of a Gas Price Watchdog - M. Colle**
First reading 208.
- Bill 28 - An Act to prohibit discrimination in the supply of gas and diesel oil to retail dealers - B. Crozier**
First reading 208.
- Bill 29 - An Act to amend the Mental Health Act - R. Patten**
First reading 275.
- Bill 30 - An Act to ensure the recognition in Ontario of credentials obtained outside Ontario - T. Silipo**
First reading 275.
- Bill 31 - An Act to amend certain statutes with respect to The Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk - T. Barrett**
First reading 276.
- Bill 32 - An Act to bring health and safety programs to Ontario students - M. Gravelle**
First reading 276.
- Bill 33 - An Act to amend the Assessment Act - D. Christopherson**
First reading 276.

**Numerical List of Private Bills
(long titles)**

Bill Pr1 - An Act respecting the City of Ottawa - G.J. Guzzo

First reading 120. Second reading 297. Third reading 297. Royal assent 4 May 1999 (The Ontario Gazette, 22 May 1999, Vol 132-21).

Bill Pr3 - An Act respecting Peterborough Regional Health Centre - R.G. Stewart

First reading 70.

Bill Pr4 - An Act respecting Canada Christian College and School of Graduate Theological Studies - F.F. Klees

First reading 12. Second reading 297. Third reading 297. Royal assent 4 May 1999 (The Ontario Gazette, 22 May 1999, Vol 132-21).

Bill Pr7 - An Act respecting the City of Windsor - S. Pupatello

First reading 119. Second reading 297. Third reading 297. Royal assent 4 May 1999 (The Ontario Gazette, 22 May 1999, Vol 132-21).

Bill Pr8 - An Act respecting the Columbus Club of Sault Ste. Marie Ltd. - T. Martin

First reading 70. Second reading 297. Third reading 297. Royal assent 4 May 1999 (The Ontario Gazette, 22 May 1999, Vol 132-21).

Liste alphabétique des projets de loi émanant du gouvernement (titres abrégés)

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